

HB 961: Public Schools and Youth Sports Programs - Concussion Protocol - Alterations: Please vote to **SUPPORT** this bill.

Dear Ways & Means Committee:

I am writing to strongly urge you to **SUPPORT HB 961**.

HB 961 would strengthen Maryland's concussion protocols for public school and youth sports programs by requiring immediate removal from play for any athlete suspected of a concussion, prohibiting return until cleared in writing by a licensed health care provider with specialized training in concussion management, mandating annual staff training on recognition and response, and improving parental notification and education about risks and recovery.

Concussions are a serious risk in youth sports—especially contact activities like football, soccer, lacrosse, and wrestling common in Maryland schools. Too often, athletes return to play too soon due to pressure, lack of clear guidelines, or inadequate medical evaluation, risking second-impact syndrome or long-term cognitive issues. **These targeted updates prioritize student-athlete brain health by ensuring prompt removal, expert clearance, and better education for coaches, parents, and students—without imposing excessive burdens on schools or programs.**

Protecting our children's long-term health and safety must come first. **Stronger, clearer concussion protocols give families confidence that schools and leagues are taking every reasonable step to prevent avoidable harm.**

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to **vote in favor of HB 961** and help strengthen concussion safeguards for Maryland's young athletes.

Thank you for your attention to this critical student safety legislation.

Sincerely,

Trudy Tibbals