



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Legislation broadens safety rules for student athletes

SB 721A expands the concussion safety requirements of Max's Law to include club sports

SALEM—Today the Oregon Senate voted to extend laws regarding the recognition and treatment of concussions and possible brain injuries in school sports. Senate Bill 721A, which applies requirements for responding to possible concussions to club sports, passed on a 23-2 vote.

“Participating in sports is a great way for students to learn how to stay healthy and active in life, but we need safeguards to make sure that we protect student athletes from the long-term effects of injuries,” said Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward (D-Beaverton), chief sponsor of the bill and a family physician. “Training coaches and referees to recognize the symptoms of concussions will allow for the prevention of further harm and earlier treatment of potentially serious brain injuries.”

In 2009, the Oregon Legislature adopted Max’s Law, which required school sports coaches and referees to recognize and respond to concussion symptoms. Under that law, injured players who showed symptoms of a concussion must be removed from game play until evaluated and cleared by a medical professional. Max’s Law also required annual training of coaches and referees in order to raise awareness of injuries that can lead to concussions and traumatic brain injury (TBI).

This year, the Senate Committee on Health Care and Human Services heard testimony from Jenna Sneva, a former student athlete who is working to raise awareness of post-concussion syndrome and TBIs. Sneva grew up in Sisters, Oregon and played club sports before becoming a world-class skier. After years of concussions from sports, she began experiencing serious migraines and was diagnosed with post-concussion syndrome, a condition that restricts her from participating in most sports. Her story motivated legislators to expand the application of Max’s Law to include club sports by passing SB 721A.

“Too many student athletes are going back into the game after getting a concussion, and that can lead to a long-term brain injury that could have been easily prevented,” said Senator Chris Edwards (D-Eugene). “Students in club sports should have the same protections and treatment as students in other high school sports.”

The Oregon Concussion Awareness and Management Program estimates that more than 1000 Oregon high school athletes experience a sports-related concussion each year. While concussions are most common in sports

such as football, soccer, and basketball, a concussion or TBI can occur in any sport or physical activity, making it necessary to expand Max's Law protocols to club sports like lacrosse, water polo, or racquetball.

“Club sports ought to have the same life-saving concussion protocols that we've extended to other sports,” said Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland). “We need to look out for young adults to make sure they have every opportunity to learn and grow on and off the field.”

SB 721A now heads to the Oregon House of Representatives for consideration.

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