



Durbin introduces bill to improve concussion safety in youth sports

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WASHINGTON — U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) today introduced the *Protecting Student Athletes from Concussions Act*, a bill that would strengthen elementary and secondary school procedures for preventing, identifying, and treating student-athletes who suffer concussions. The National Federation of State High School Associations estimates that about 140,000 students playing high school sports suffer concussions every year, though many go unreported. The bill requires states to adopt “when in doubt, sit it out” policies, which prevent student athletes suspected of having sustained a concussion from returning to play the same day and, after that, only once cleared by a qualified health care professional.

“Removing the return to play decision from coaches and athletes who are, understandably, anxious to prove themselves will better protect the health and safety of students,” Durbin said. “Given what we now know about the long term dangers of concussions, we can no longer afford to have the old ‘shake it off’ mentality.”

Durbin’s legislation will also raise awareness about the danger of concussions among student athletes by directing states to develop concussion safety guidelines for public school districts. This includes posting educational information on school grounds and school websites about concussion symptoms, risks and recommended responses for student athletes, parents, coaches, and school officials.

Durbin’s legislation also builds on a comprehensive plan implemented by the Illinois High School Association, which regulates interscholastic high school sports in the state. Illinois law requires school districts to educate students, families, and coaches about the nature and risk of concussions and requires student-athletes to abstain from sports until they receive a medical evaluation and a letter of clearance from a licensed health care professional authorizing a safe return.

Additional organizations endorsing Durbin's *Protecting Student Athletes from Concussions Act* include: the American College of Sports Medicine, the American Academy of Neurology, the National Collegiate Athletic Association, the National Football League, the National Basketball Association, Major League Baseball, the National Hockey League, the National Parent Teacher Association, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the Sports & Fitness Industry Association, the Korey Stringer Institute, and Safe Kids World Wide.