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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2017

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- SCHOOL AND YOUTH PROGRAMS CONCUSSION ACT

Introduced By: Representatives Kazarian, Bennett, Donovan, Amore, and McKiernan

Date Introduced: January 13, 2017

Referred To: House Health, Education & Welfare

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-91-3 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-91 entitled "School and  
2 Youth Programs Concussion Act" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **16-91-3. School district's guidelines to be developed and implemented.**

4 (a) The department of education and the department of health shall work in concert with  
5 the Rhode Island Interscholastic League to develop and promulgate guidelines to inform and  
6 educate coaches, teachers, school nurses, youth athletes, and their parents and/or guardians of the  
7 nature and risk of concussion and head injury, including continuing to play after concussion or  
8 head injury. A concussion and head injury information sheet shall be signed and returned by the  
9 youth athlete and the athlete's parent and/or guardian prior to the youth athlete's return to practice  
10 or competition.

11 (b) School districts are required to use training materials made available by the United  
12 States Center for Disease Control and Prevention entitled "Heads Up: Concussion in the High  
13 School Sports/Concussion in Youth Sports" and any updates or amendments thereto, or training  
14 materials substantively and substantially similar thereto. The department of education shall post  
15 training materials made available by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the  
16 Rhode Island Interscholastic League on its website. All coaches and volunteers involved in a  
17 youth sport or activity covered by this chapter must complete a training course and a refresher  
18 course annually thereafter in concussions and traumatic brain injuries. All school nurses must  
19 complete a training course and an annual refresher course in concussions and traumatic brain

1 injuries. Teachers and teachers' aides are strongly encouraged to complete the training course in  
2 concussions and traumatic brain injuries. Training may consist of videos, classes, and any other  
3 generally accepted mode and medium of providing information.

4 (c) School districts are encouraged to have all student athletes perform baseline  
5 neuropsychological testing, computerized or otherwise. Parents and/or guardians shall be  
6 provided with information as to the risk of concussion and/or traumatic brain injuries prior to the  
7 start of every sport season and they shall sign an acknowledgement as to their receipt of such  
8 information.

9 (d) A youth athlete, who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a  
10 practice or game, shall be removed from competition at that time.

11 (e) A youth athlete, who has been removed from play, may not return to play until the  
12 athlete is evaluated by a licensed physician who may consult with an athletic trainer, all of whom  
13 shall be trained in the evaluation and management of concussions. The athlete must receive  
14 written clearance to return to play from that licensed physician.

15 (f) All school districts are encouraged to have an athletic trainer, or similarly trained  
16 person, at all recreational and athletic events addressed by this statute.

17 (g) School districts are required to mandate that any female softball player who is  
18 nineteen (19) years of age or younger, and who plays softball at either first base, third base or  
19 pitcher position shall be required to wear a protective face mask. The protective face mask shall  
20 be worn in both practice and games, and any mask worn must meet National Operating  
21 Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) or American Society for Testing and  
22 Materials (ASTM) test standards at the time of manufacture; provided, the Rhode Island  
23 Interscholastic League shall promulgate rules and regulations necessary to implement the  
24 requirements of this section.

25 SECTION 2. Chapter 23-1 of the General Laws entitled "Department of Health" is  
26 hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

27 **23-1-59. Youth sports safety - Protective face masks required.**

28 Any youth sports program offering girls softball shall require that any female softball  
29 player who is nineteen (19) years of age or younger and who plays softball at either first base,  
30 third base or pitcher position shall be required to wear a protective face mask. The protective face  
31 mask shall be worn in both practice and games, and any mask worn must meet National  
32 Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) or American Society for  
33 Testing and Materials (ASTM) test standards at the time of manufacture.

1 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

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1           This act would require that Interscholastic League Athletes and youth sports athletes who  
2 are female and 19 years of age or younger and who play certain softball positions wear protective  
3 face masks during practice and at games.

4           This act would take effect upon passage.

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