



## **Amended Testimony - Considerations for screening standards February 2021**

To the Committee on Children,

The National Council of Youth Sports (NCYS) shares your goal to improve safety for youth sports programs across the state of Connecticut and amends our original testimony to offer conditional support for HB 6511, with some minor adjustments to the current language.

We respectfully request the background check requirements being developed under HB 6511, requiring background checks for youth sports coaches, trainers and instructors allow for background checks that are deemed an acceptable alternative to fingerprinting and align with the important national youth protection standards, established by NCYS.

As a leading voice for youth organizations in America, NCYS works with hundreds of youth serving organizations. NCYS members comprise some of the most respected organizations in the youth sports industry. The NCYS membership serves some 60 million boys and girls registered in organized youth sports programs. Safety is one of our highest priorities, towards which we have invested considerably to advance standards of care and partnerships that align with industry-wide best practices.

NCYS has been on the frontlines of safety in youth sports for more than 15 years. We were named in the federal Protect Act of 2003 and authored the earliest "Recommended Guidelines for Background Screening for Youth Serving Organizations" in 2005 that were updated again in 2012. These guidelines create reliable standards that include a minimum protocol for search components to be included in a responsible background screening program, as well as criteria to consider when evaluating the appropriateness of an individual's fitness for duty.

I offer this background to raise your awareness of the substantial amount of work that has gone into the development of effective national youth protection standards for background screening policies so that you support their adoption in the state of Connecticut. We request proposed HB 6511 legislation be amended to allow for background checks that are deemed an acceptable alternative to fingerprinting, and that ideally include (at a minimum) the following search components:

1. Social Security Number validation;
2. Name and address history records;
3. Multi-Jurisdictional Criminal Database searches covering 50 states plus DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico;
4. County Criminal Records for each name used and county where the individual

currently lives or has lived during at least the past five years, going back the length of time records are available and reportable for each county searched;

5. National Sex Offender Registry database search of all available states, plus DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico;
6. Multiple National Watch Lists

The basis for our respectful request for your consideration is to help shape Connecticut's state requirements to align with the consistent, high national safety standards that are currently pervasive in the youth sports and volunteer landscape. We hope to ensure that Connecticut's requirements serve to enforce these standards and do not create confusion due to any inconsistencies with industry best practices, which may make it difficult for organizations to adhere to and may be overly burdensome for them to comply with.

We appreciate your consideration and would welcome the opportunity to speak with you further on this matter. Please let us know if you have any questions. On behalf of youth sports, we thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to safety.

Sincerely,

Wayne B. Moss

Executive Director, NCYS

