
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6561 (as amended by House "A")*

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE FOR THE PROTECTION OF YOUTH AND INTRAMURAL AND INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETES.

SUMMARY

This bill establishes a 14-member task force to study injury prevention practices and safety protocols in youth sports leagues and intramural and interscholastic athletic programs.

The bill requires the task force to annually report its findings and recommendations to the Children's Committee starting by January 1, 2025, except those related to the use of protective neck guards in ice hockey must be reported by January 1, 2024.

The bill also allows any privately operated youth athletic program to adopt the task force's recommendations in developing its injury prevention practices and safety protocols.

*House Amendment "A" makes changes to the membership and reporting requirements of the taskforce the underlying bill creates. Specifically, it (1) makes the task force report to the Children's Committee an annual requirement; (2) specifies that the medical expertise required of some of the task force members must be further specialized in pediatrics; and (3) generally substitutes the Senate president pro tempore and the Senate majority leader appointees under the bill (i.e., a sports psychology expert and a municipal youth sports league representative) with those shown below. It also eliminates the requirement that the task force recommendations for a state-wide system of injury prevention include leagues and programs reporting injuries to the Department of Public Health and meeting annually with the commissioner.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except the provision that allows youth athletic programs to adopt the task force's recommendations is effective January 1, 2024.

INJURY PREVENTION PRACTICES AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS TASK FORCE

Purpose

The task force must analyze:

1. the efficacy and safety of using protective neck guards in ice hockey;
2. information on cardiac health and youth athletes, to determine whether and what type of cardiac testing should be required for participation in all or certain leagues or programs;
3. the effects of synthetic turf, crumb rubber, and pesticides on the health of youth athletes, including rates of cancer and other chronic or acute illnesses attributable to these substances, to identify safe and unsafe playing field conditions for youth athletes; and
4. best practices for injury prevention and safety protocols and compare them to existing practices across the state to identify areas for improvement.

It must also make recommendations to implement a state-wide system of injury prevention practices and safety protocol review, including requirements that the leagues and programs make their injury prevention practices and safety protocols public.

Membership and Appointments

The task force's 14 members must be appointed as follows:

1. two by the House speaker, one each with expertise in pediatric sports medicine and pediatric neuroscience;
2. two by the Senate president pro tempore, a representative of a nonprofit organization that serves as a governing body for

- interscholastic athletic activities and a representative of a municipal parks and recreation department that is a member of a state-wide parks and recreation association;
3. two by the House majority leader, one each with expertise in pediatric cardiology and environmental health;
 4. two by the Senate majority leader, one who is a medical professional with expertise in treating pediatric patients with sports injuries and another who represents a state-wide association of athletic trainers;
 5. two appointed by the House minority leader, one who represents a state-wide association of athletic directors and another who is a pediatric orthopedics expert;
 6. two by the Senate minority leader, one who is a legislator and another who represents a state-wide association of independent schools; and
 7. the Education and Public Health commissioners, or their designees.

Initial appointments must be made within 30 days after the bill becomes effective and the appointing authority must fill any vacancies.

The House speaker and the Senate president must each appoint a chairperson from among the task force's members, who must jointly schedule the first meeting within 60 days after the bill's effective date.

The Children Committee's administrative staff must serve as the task force's administrative staff.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 19 Nay 0 (02/28/2023)