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January 27, 2023

The Honorable Dick Durbin
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Durbin,

The American Academy of Neurology (AAN), the world's largest association of neurologists representing 38,000 professionals, is strongly committed to improving the care and outcomes of persons with neurologic illness in a cost-effective manner. We would like to express our support for the Protecting Student Athletes from Concussions Act of 2023.

A concussion is the most common type of traumatic brain injury (TBI) and it is estimated that over 5 million children have reported ever having concussion symptoms.^{1,2} Sports and recreation-related TBIs are a leading cause of TBI-related emergency department visits among children and teens, with an estimated 325,000 occurring each year.³ While the majority of concussions are self-limited injuries, catastrophic results can occur and the long-term effects of multiple concussions are unknown.

The Academy encourages lawmakers across the country to implement language revolving around three key elements:

- Ongoing concussion education for young athletes, parents, and coaches;
- Immediate removal of an athlete from play or practice if they appear to have suffered from a concussion; and
- Mandatory evaluation and clearance of an athlete by a physician or licensed health care professional with sufficient training in the evaluation of management of concussion before returning to play.

The AAN is pleased that your legislation addresses each of these elements.

¹ Black LI & Zablotsky B. Concussions and Brain Injuries in Children: United States, 2020. NCHS Data Brief, no 423. National Center for Health Statistics. 2021.

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.15620/cdc.111174external icon>

² Kaiser Family Foundation. Population Distribution by Age. State Health Facts.

<https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/distribution-by-age>

³ Coronado VG, Haileyesus T, Cheng TA, et al. Trends in sports- and recreation-related traumatic brain injuries treated in US emergency departments: The National Electronic Injury Surveillance System-All Injury Program (NEISS-AIP) 2001-2012. The Journal Of Head Trauma Rehabilitation. 2015;30(3):185-197

Thank you for your work on this critical issue. Please contact Kelly McCone, Senior Congressional Affairs Manager, at kmccone@aan.com or Madeline Turbes, Health Policy Manager, at mturbes@aan.com if you have any questions or requests for additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Orly Avitzur MD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Orly Avitzur, MD, MBA, FAAN
President, American Academy of Neurology