



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Greg Ball

Senator Ball Co-Sponsors the Concussion Management Awareness Act During Brain Injury Awareness Month

GREG BALL March 22, 2011

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March is brain injury awareness month. Senator Greg Ball (R, C—Westchester/Putnam/Dutchess) on Brain Injury Awareness Day, March 16th, joined Senator Kemp Hannon, Chair of the Senate Health Committee, Senator George Maziarz, co-sponsor, and members of the Sarah Jane Brain Foundation, a group that advocates nationwide for victims of brain injuries, to push for legislative action on the Concussion Management Awareness Act.

“We realize now what we may not have known a few decades back. Concussions create long-term, detrimental health effects, and those hits taken on the playing fields can have substantial and lasting impacts. It’s time to get serious and protect our young athletes so they can enjoy long and healthy lives,” said Senator Ball.

The bill ([S.3953](#)), co-sponsored by Senator Ball, would direct the State Health and Education Departments to adopt rules and regulations for the treatment and monitoring of students with mild traumatic brain injuries. It is essential to educate the students, their parents or guardians, coaches and school staff about the proper early recognition of the signs and symptoms of concussions. “When a student suffers a head injury playing sports, it can affect the rest of his or her life. Our effort helps develop a plan to make sure that young athletes are treated and supervised properly to protect their long-term health and well-being as much as possible,” said Senator Maziarz.

Senator Ball understands that too many New Yorkers are faced with the dilemma of not being able to afford vital medical care. According to the New York State Department of Health between 2006 and 2008 more than 23,000 school aged children visited the emergency department for concussions. The cost of their medical care is estimated at 80 million dollars. The three year total cost of both hospitalization and emergency department visits in the same period for all age groups in the state was over 1 billion dollars.

“Coaches are educated on many pressing issues associated with organized youth sports, specifically concussions,” said David Furfaro, President of The Mahopac Sports Association. The MSA has a “When in doubt leave them out” policy. “I applaud Senator Ball’s effort to stay out in front of this very important issue keeping the children of our community safe.” Furfaro said.

“By instituting these regulations, school personnel will be able to more easily identify concussions and thereby reduce the risk of long-term complications in our young people,” Senator Hannon said. The proposed legislation would require that each school district have a concussion management team comprised of health and sports staff. The concussion management team would be responsible for overseeing staff training, educating parents and students about concussions and helping transition students who have sustained a concussion back into school and sports with specified guidelines. “In the future, this legislation will encourage parents, students and coaches to take preventative steps to avoid such significant injuries,” Senator Hannon said.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 1.7 million people sustain a traumatic brain injury and children under age 4, and almost half a million emergency department visits are made every year for traumatic brain injuries by children under age 14.