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March 8, 2012

The Honorable John Kline
 Chairman
 Committee on Education and the Workforce
 2181 Rayburn House Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Kline:

Recently published research¹ by the Université de Montréal has found that high school athletes are uniquely vulnerable to long-term brain injury from sports-related concussions. The findings indicate that not only are teenagers more susceptible to severe concussions than are adults, but also that the effects among teenagers can be much more difficult to detect and diagnose.

This report is just one of a number of studies that have underscored the increasing public concern surrounding sports-related concussions. It is clear that students who sustain multiple undiagnosed concussions or return to play too soon after enduring a head injury are at far greater risk of suffering adverse consequences than those given the proper time to heal from their injuries. The permanent deterioration of cognitive facilities and chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), a progressive brain disease caused by repetitive brain trauma,² are just two of the common neurological maladies associated with sports-related concussions.

Though some states have begun taking the proper steps to address concussion-related issues, far too many states fail to provide even the most basic guidelines for schools on how to better protect student athletes from the risks associated with head injuries. In response to this growing epidemic, during the 111th Congress our Committee held hearings and considered legislation addressing the issue. The need for action continues unabated. Earlier this Congress, we introduced the Protecting Student Athletes from Concussions Act of 2011 (H.R. 469). We respectfully request that you call a legislative hearing to consider this bill.

¹ See Annie Baillargeon, Maryse Lassonde, Suzanne Leclerc, and Dave Elleberg. *Neuropsychological and neurophysiological assessment of sport concussion in children, adolescents and adults*, Brain Injury (March 2012).

² See report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention entitled *Sports-related recurrent brain injuries—United States* (March 14, 1997) available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00046702.htm>.

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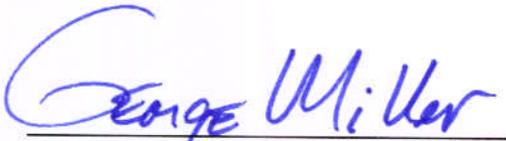
This legislation, modeled after successful state plans, is supported by a wide range of medical associations, school officials, and professional athletic leagues. It would institute clear, minimal standards to make sports safer for students by ensuring that:

- School districts develop and implement a standard, community-based plan for concussion safety and management.
- Schools post information about concussions visibly within the school and on the school website.
- Students who are suspected of sustaining a concussion during a school-sponsored athletic activity would be removed from participation, prohibited from returning to play that day, and evaluated by a health care professional, in addition to mandatory notification of their parents.
- Students recovering from concussions would be provided support at school and in the case of prolonged recovery would be provided access to special education services.

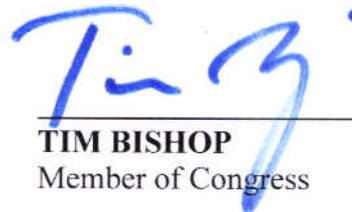
The Protecting Student Athletes from Concussions Act is a sensible approach to working with states, schools, students and coaches to promote high school athletics and academic achievement. Congress should act to provide such basic protections for our student athletes.

We look forward to working with you on scheduling a hearing on this important matter. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



GEORGE MILLER
Senior Democratic Member



TIM BISHOP
Member of Congress