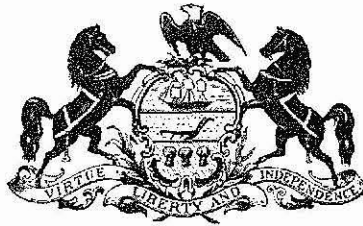


BRYAN CUTLER, MEMBER
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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
MINORITY SECRETARY
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
GAME AND FISHERIES
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

MEMORANDUM

September 25, 2007

TO: Children and Youth Committee Members

FROM: Representative Bryan Cutler
100th Legislative District

Dear Colleagues:

Please find enclosed a letter from Don't Take My Bat Away Coalition. In light of proposed legislation regarding banning non-wood bats, I find this information to be very helpful.

Our first priority is the safety of our children, however, I am of the opinion that this is not an issue that needs to be addressed through legislation. I believe that this issue is already being handled within many of the baseball organizations throughout the Commonwealth.

In closing, I would ask you to carefully review the letter and consider all the statistics presented before making a decision on the proposed ban.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bryan Cutler".

BC/jjw



Dusty Baker
National Chairman

September 25, 2007

Honorable Mike Carroll
28A East Wing
PO Box 202118
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2118

Dear Representative Carroll:

Thank you for your interest in keeping youth baseball and softball safe. I am writing in response to your June 22 column in the *Community Express* about the safety of non-wood bats. I also welcome the opportunity to write to you in advance of the important September 27th hearing the Pennsylvania House of Representatives is holding on your proposal to ban metal bats for use in youth softball and baseball.

As National Chairman of the Don't Take My Bat Away Coalition, I am writing to respectfully clarify and address some of the issues you raised in your column. I share your priority to keep baseball and softball safe, while also keeping it fun.

According to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Injury Surveillance System, baseball is one of the safest of the 15 NCAA sports surveyed. Only women's volleyball and women's softball are ranked safer sports. Given the fact that youth baseball is not played at the same caliber as college baseball, if it's that safe in college where the players are better and the balls are hit harder, it's certainly just as safe if not safer at the youth level. And according to the National Center for Catastrophic Sports Injury Research at the University of North Carolina, a catastrophic injury to a pitcher occurred only once for every million high school aged participants.

Despite how safe baseball is with both wood and metal bats, you state that banning metal bats in youth baseball and softball leagues is gaining a lot of attention "because of the increased risk of injury to our young people." I would like to know what "increased risk" you are referencing. Do you have data or injury statistics that support your claim? If so, would you kindly share your information or make it public? Unless you have some data of which I am not aware, your statement about increased risk is incorrect. In fact,

data from Little League, where metal bat use is virtually universal, show injuries to pitchers from batted balls have *declined* in the last twenty years, not increased.

As you may know, since 2003, metal bats used in high schools have been scientifically regulated so that the speed of batted balls off metal bats is comparable to that of the best major league wood bats. This safety standard has been adopted by the (NCAA) and the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). In fact, a federal judge reviewed all the evidence about this issue just last month and concluded, “there is no empirical evidence” that banning non-wood bats would reduce injuries. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission also said there is not sufficient data to conclude that metal bats pose an unreasonable risk of injury. So the evidence shows that baseball and softball are very safe with both wood and non-wood bats.

Second, you cite a 2002 Brown University that says balls hit by metal bats travel “about 7 miles per hour faster.” However, the research for that study was done using bats from 1997 and 1998 -- *bats which would be illegal today.* In fact, the author of the Brown study, Dr. Richard Greenwald, has provided testimony for the Children and Youth Committee’s upcoming hearing which states that the research in his study was on bats “which predated current NCAA and high school regulations on metal bats.” Most important, Dr. Greenwald is strongly opposed to your legislation because he has seen no evidence that today’s non-wood bats pose any additional risk to players.

Third, while you are right that North Dakota high schools have switched to all-wood, it is wrong to state that the reason was for safety. The fact is North Dakota went to all-wood because metal bats dent easily in the cold North Dakota weather. It’s also worth noting that Massachusetts had a statewide ban in place some years ago, but has since reversed it and now allows players to choose between wood and non-wood bats.

Finally, there is an indirect suggestion in your column that opponents of non-wood bat bans do not place safety as a top priority – which is just not the case at all. Safety is a top priority for all of us, which is why a ban on non-wood bats is opposed by American Legion Baseball, the NFHS, NCAA, American Baseball Coaches Association, Little League, Babe Ruth League and PONY League.

As a former Major League Baseball player and manager, and as the father of an eight-year old son who uses a metal bat, I support players using the bat of their choice because I know wood and metal are safe. If they weren’t, I wouldn’t let my son use an aluminum bat.

I strongly believe that leagues, players, coaches and baseball officials should decide what type of bat they want to use. I support leagues switching to all wood for tradition or style of play if they so desire but I strongly oppose government bans based on the undocumented and unproven suggestion that today’s metal bats, the top preference of virtually every amateur player, are less safe than wood. The truth is they are both safe.

Representative Carroll, I know your interest in this matter is heartfelt and I appreciate your interest in keeping baseball safe and fun for everyone. I look forward to working with you on this issue.

Sincerely yours,

Dusty Baker
National Chairman