

THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA

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September 17, 2007

The Honorable Louise Williams Bishop, Chairman
The Honorable Carole A. Rubley, Chairman
Pennsylvania House of Representatives
Committee on Children & Youth
Room 326 Main Capitol Building
P. O. Box 202192
Harrisburg, PA. 17120

VIA E-mail hwalsh@pahouse.net

Dear Chairman Bishop and Chairman Rubley:

Please find attached testimony from Pennsylvania's American Legion Baseball in opposition to HB 1482. It is my understanding written testimony can be submitted for the record and your hearing on this legislation.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have or any members of the committee have any questions about American Legion Baseball.

Sincerely,



Ford L. Carnes, Jr.
Activities Director
American Legion Baseball, Pennsylvania

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Ford L. Carnes, Jr., Activities Director, American Legion Baseball, Pennsylvania

Opposition to HB 1482

Members of the House Children and Youth Committee:

On behalf of Pennsylvania American Legion Baseball, I am expressing our concern and opposition with HB 1482, a bill pending in the Pennsylvania State Assembly that would change our league's rules in Pennsylvania. This bill would make illegal, what thousands of children and teenagers in the state do today – safely – and that is play baseball.

Since 1926, the American Legion has sponsored a nationwide youth baseball program; **in Pennsylvania we started in 1926, we have 600 teams which includes approximately over 10,000 players and some 1300 volunteers.** As part of a national organization, and one that is committed to our players, volunteers, and communities, we are opposed to this bill. Pennsylvania is the largest Department in the American Legion with almost 250,000 members.

This is our 81st year sponsoring a baseball program; the American Legion National Headquarters has never charged any player a fee to play baseball. Our annual budget is more than \$1 million, which is paid for by the dues of our members. As an organization, we committed to our players learning the game, the lessons of teamwork and fair play, as well as their personal safety.

The American Legion, along with other leagues and associations, continuously monitors the rules and equipment in the game of baseball. This stewardship of the game, I believe, led to the development and adoption, of the BESR aluminum bat testing and certification process in 1998.

Due to the independent testing and certification process, BESR bats used today in American Legion perform like wood bats. Offensive batting statistics over the past six years, like batting averages and runs per game, have dropped and the offensive aspects of the game are in line with pitching and defense.

The safety of the game continues to be high; and in comparison to other high school and collegiate activities, baseball is one of the safest sports. This said, injuries and even tragedies do happen in sports and baseball. Everyone involved in sports and activities must warn parents and players that there is an inherent risk playing to a game, including baseball.

I hope this information is helpful and that you can appreciate the view of the American Legion with respect to baseball safety and the use of aluminum bats.

Our league and teams do, collectively, act in the best interest of our players. Requiring wood bats, however, will not make the game safer or prevent injuries. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call me and the American Legion.

Ford L. Carnes, Jr.
Activities Director
American Legion Baseball, Pennsylvania