

Walsh, Heather

From: Ron Davini [rdavini@cox.net]
Sent: Wednesday, September 19, 2007 4:01 PM
To: Walsh, Heather
Subject: Opposed to HB 1482



September 19, 2007

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

Sent via e-mail: hwalsh@pahouse.net

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Dear Chairman Bishop and Chairman Rubley:

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Attached is written testimony from the National High School Baseball Coaches Association regarding HB 1482. On behalf of our national association and our members from Pennsylvania, we would like these comments placed into the Committee's record and shared with all your colleagues.

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Respectfully,

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Ron Davini

Executive Director

National High School Baseball Coaches Association

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Opposed to HB 1482

9/20/2007

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Members of the Children and Youth Committee:

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The National High School Baseball Coaches Association (BCA) was formed in July 1991 to provide services and recognition for baseball coaches and to help promote and represent high school baseball. The current membership has coaches from every state sponsoring high school baseball including some great teacher/coaches from Pennsylvania. Our members are committed to the best interest of their players on and off the field and in and out of the classroom.

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I would like to provide you with some written information about our organization, the commitment that high school coaches have toward safety, and the use of aluminum bats in competitive play today.

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Given the legislation pending in Pennsylvania (HB1482) would prohibit the use of aluminum and composite bats, I wanted to make sure you had our organization's perspective: aluminum bats have had a favorable impact on amateur baseball and they do not make the game unsafe. In fact, baseball is among the safest sports played in high schools today.

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As coaches and educators, our members share the enthusiasm players have for the game and the work ethic it takes to succeed on the field and in the classroom. Our coaches at the high school level know academics are the first priority for every student. We also know that a student's safety in the classroom and on the field must be constantly monitored.

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Aluminum bats have been used since the early 1970s; they were initially developed for budgetary and safety reasons. Wood bats were breaking and shattering causing a financial strain for teams and players off the field and a safety concern on the field. [Interestingly, the quality of the lumber used in wood baseball bats vary significantly, and the best grains of wood are used exclusively for Major League players. Amateur leagues and retail outlets get lower quality wood and lower quality bats that more likely to shatter or break and then need to be replaced.]

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We do not believe that aluminum bats are a safety issue to players. Coaches, leagues and associations have continuously monitored the rules and equipment of the game. A fundamental change in aluminum bats occurred more than six years ago when the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) moved to limit and cap the performance of aluminum baseball bats through independent testing and certification.

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The Ball Exit Speed Ratio (BESR) certification process, which has been conducted at the Baseball Research Center at UMass-Lowell Department of Mechanical Engineering, ensures an aluminum bat meets four criteria:

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- The maximum exit speed is similar to the performance of the best Northern White Ash wood bat 97 miles per hour;

- The bat's length to weight differential is no greater than minus-3 (for instance a 34 inch bat must weigh 31 ounces ? the bat is heavier);
- The barrel diameter may not exceed a maximum of 2 5/8 inches ? bats in the past were 2 3/4 inches ? the barrel is smaller;
- The balance point of the bat meets the moment-of-inertia requirement.

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High schools adopted the BESR standards one year after the NCAA; all leagues with high-school aged players use BESR bats as well. **The impact of these bats ? comparing statistics from prior to 1998 ? have been very favorable; scoring, batting averages and home runs are down in leagues across the nation.**

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If you have any questions about this issue, I hope you or your staff will contact me to discuss non-wood bats. I hope you and your committee will talk to coaches and league officials in Pennsylvania as well. I know coaches like **Bill Sassaman (Manheim Township High School/President of Pennsylvania Baseball Coaches Association)** and **Greg Williams (Meadville High School)** can talk to you about safety and today's high school game.

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After reviewing the facts, I believe you will conclude like we have and agree that aluminum bats are not a safety risk compared to wood bats and that their contribution to amateur baseball has been positive.

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