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This comment is being submitted in support of Senate Bill 721.

From an early age, Jenna showed so much promise. She was in accelerated classes in elementary school, an A student and even received an award in 5th grade as the "Math athlete of Central Oregon".

Throughout grade school and into her high school years, Jenna was considered by many to be one of the best, if not the best, athlete in any sport she attempted. Her athletic achievements culminated in her being selected to the United States Ski and Snowboard Association and National Softball Team. Her last days on skis were winning Nationals, USSA Skier Cross. Everything was set up for Jenna to have an idyllic life that most children only dream about.

But things began to change for Jenna from an academic standpoint when she entered middle school. Courses that she once breezed through became increasingly difficult...so much so that we eventually had to enroll her at the Sylvan Learning Center for remedial help in reading, writing, speech, and even math. When Jenna eventually went on to college at OSU and began to fail in her coursework, it finally became clear that there was a serious problem.

It was only through the outstanding work by Dr. Chesnutt and his medical team at OHSU, that we finally learned the real cause of Jenna's problem, Traumatic Brain Injury from repeated head injuries from her participation in sports. Because of the efforts of Dr. Chesnutt and his staff, Jenna will fortunately have the promise of a fulfilling, happy life, although she will never again be able to participate in contact sports of any kind.

Jenna has a brain of a 60 year old stroke victim, is at high risk for early onset of Alzheimer's and dementia and will live forever with the risk of coma or death if she sustains even a minor blow to her head. What takes us 6 hours to accomplish, takes Jenna 15 due to permanent brain damage.

My sincere hope is that each of you gives serious consideration to this important bill before you. If the measures in Senate Bill 721 had been in place throughout Jenna's childhood, she would clearly not have had to experience the many difficulties she has faced.

Athletes, coaches and parents all need to hear this message loud and clear... "Our children's safety should NEVER be compromised when it comes to participation in sports. Winning a game or having a winning season should ALWAYS be secondary to protecting our most precious resource...our children."

If we do nothing, and allow more young athletes to be pushed back out onto the field before it is safe to do so, aren't we in some ways culpable ourselves? How many more stories like Jenna's are we willing to tolerate? We have an historic opportunity to protect our young athletes from the severe consequences of Traumatic Brain Injury. There is NO Downside to passing this legislation. We are simply asking you to act on what is the most basic of parental instincts..."Protecting our children from harm".

Jenna and I and the medical team at OHSU cannot fight this fight alone. We need the backbone and muscle of legislative action to send a strong message that our children and their well being are truly our #1 priority.

Hopefully no family in Oregon will have to experience the angst and sadness and frustration that our family has had to endure. But even if we can protect only one child and his or her parents from the devastating consequences of Traumatic Brain Injury, our efforts and the efforts of this committee will be well worth it.

Sincerely,



Ronda Sneva