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Senate Bill 721— Is A No Brainer

Over the past 21 years I have had the opportunity to coach hundreds of athletes, on and off the snow. I am now in a position to teach other coaches and instructors as a trainer for the Professional Ski Instructors of America.

I am convinced I would benefit from additional concussion education in order to assist others in recognizing the signs and symptoms, as well as when to make the call to send an athlete for evaluation before letting him or her practice or compete. Educated decisions by coaches, parents, officials and doctors need to be made for an athlete's well-being no matter how hard that decision.

I never want to see another athlete suffer the debilitating, long-term effects caused by multiple concussions similar to Jenna Sneva.

As a coach I have seen the hard work, dedication, and dreams of athletes I have had the opportunity to coach. I see their amazing potential. Every practice and event they compete in is an opportunity for them to advance closer to their dreams.

Broken bones, cuts, bruises, sprained and torn ligaments are easy to identify, so deciding to sit it out is an easy decision for coach, parent and athlete. Concussions are a different story. You can't see the damage. The symptoms are not always obvious, and the coaches don't always know the athlete's history of concussions. To date there hasn't been a clear explanation of the various symptoms and what is the right thing to do.

There are so many different emotions and people involved in a young person's athletics. The athlete that wants more than anything to continue playing, the parent who insists their child continues playing, and the coaches who really want to help the athlete realize their dreams. The decision to pull an athlete after a hit to the head is agonizing.

Educating coaches and parents about concussions and the signs to watch for would benefit all young athletes and help prevent permanent brain damage caused by multiple concussions.

This law ensures that brain injury education is delivered to coaches, parents and athletes in a wide range of sports, giving participants an opportunity to heal before getting back on the slopes, field or gymnasium.

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