



# MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

850 Hungerford Drive ♦ Room 123 ♦ Rockville, Maryland 20850



Bill: House Bill 29  
Title: Concussions - Penalties for Coaches  
Committee: Ways and Means  
Date: January 28, 2016  
**Position: OPPOSE**  
Contact: Michael Durso, President, Montgomery County Board of Education

The Montgomery County Board of Education opposes House Bill 29.

This bill applies to a very specific penalty for a very specific process. It also creates a specific appeals process to a very specific infraction. The bill involves processes and penalties to athletic coaches who insert players into a competition after players have displayed symptoms of a concussion and may actually serve to undermine school systems in their efforts to protect students while protecting coaches who do not follow local school system policies and procedures regarding head injuries.

Superintendents already can suspend coaches in the manner described in the proposed legislation. In fact, they can do so without having to follow the level of detail described in HB0029 and for numerous potential reasons. Among other matters, athletic coaches in Maryland public schools are not tenured positions and are not subject to the same due-process procedures as those in tenured positions. In this regard, it almost appears as though HB0029 is intended to protect coaches who violate school system policies and regulations. There is no reason to enact a law that will do that which is already being done. There is no need to create a new, separate set of procedures for concussions. Current Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) procedures mirror those established by other states.

Increasingly, MPSSAA schools and school systems are utilizing full-time athletic trainers; the majority of schools have full-time athletic trainers. For these schools and school systems, the athletic trainer makes the final determination on whether a student-athlete may return to action following an injury, not the coach.

For these reasons, we oppose this bill and ask for an unfavorable report.