

HOUSE BILL 961

F1

6lr2895

By: **Delegate Miller**

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2026

Assigned to: Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Public Schools and Youth Sports Programs – Concussion Protocol – Alterations**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the State Department of Education to include athletic
4 officials in certain policies and in a certain program to provide awareness on a certain
5 concussion protocol for certain public school and youth sports programs; establishing
6 that certain individuals may remove a student from play and prevent a student from
7 returning to play under certain circumstances; authorizing a person to bring a
8 certain action for declaratory relief to enforce certain provisions of law; and generally
9 relating to a concussion protocol for public school and youth sports programs.

10 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
11 Article – Education
12 Section 7–433
13 Annotated Code of Maryland
14 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

15 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
16 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

17 **Article – Education**

18 7–433.

19 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

20 (2) **“ATHLETIC OFFICIAL” MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO OFFICIATES A**
21 **SPORTS CONTEST FOR COMPENSATION OR AS A VOLUNTEER.**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 **[(2)] (3)** “Concussion” means a traumatic injury to the brain causing an
2 immediate and, usually, short-lived change in mental status or an alteration of normal
3 consciousness resulting from:

4 (i) A fall;

5 (ii) A violent blow to the head or body; or

6 (iii) The shaking or spinning of the head or body.

7 **[(3)] (4)** “Youth sports program” means a program organized for
8 recreational athletic competition or instruction for participants who are under the age of
9 19 years.

10 (b) (1) The Department shall develop policies and implement a program to
11 provide awareness to **ATHLETIC OFFICIALS**, coaches, school personnel, students, and the
12 parents or guardians of students, in collaboration with the Maryland Department of
13 Health, each county board, the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association,
14 the Maryland Athletic Trainers’ Association, the Brain Injury Association of Maryland, and
15 representatives of licensed health care providers who treat concussions, on:

16 (i) The nature and risk of a concussion or head injury;

17 (ii) The criteria for removal from and return to play **ESTABLISHED**
18 **UNDER THIS SECTION**;

19 (iii) The risks of not reporting injury and continuing to play; and

20 (iv) Appropriate academic accommodations for students diagnosed as
21 having sustained a concussion or head injury.

22 (2) The program shall include a process to verify that [a coach has]
23 **ATHLETIC OFFICIALS AND COACHES HAVE** received information on the program
24 developed under paragraph (1) of this subsection.

25 (3) (i) Before a student enrolled in a public school system in the State
26 may participate in an authorized interscholastic athletic activity, the county board shall
27 provide a concussion and head injury information sheet to the student and a parent or
28 guardian of the student.

29 (ii) The student and the parent or guardian of the student shall sign
30 a statement acknowledging receipt of the information sheet.

31 (iii) The Department shall create the information sheet and
32 acknowledgment statement required under this paragraph.

1 (4) The Department may use materials available from the Centers for
2 Disease Control and Prevention, the Brain Injury Association of Maryland, or any other
3 appropriate entity to carry out the requirements of this subsection.

4 (c) (1) A student who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or other head
5 injury in a practice or game shall be removed from play at that time.

6 (2) A student who has been removed from play may not return to play until
7 the student has obtained written clearance from a licensed health care provider trained in
8 the evaluation and management of concussions.

9 **(D) (1) THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS MAY IMMEDIATELY REMOVE A**
10 **STUDENT FROM PLAY IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (C)(1) OF THIS SECTION**
11 **OR PREVENT A STUDENT FROM RETURNING TO PLAY IN ACCORDANCE WITH**
12 **SUBSECTION (C)(2) OF THIS SECTION:**

13 **(I) AN ATHLETIC OFFICIAL;**

14 **(II) A COACH;**

15 **(III) SCHOOL PERSONNEL; OR**

16 **(IV) A PARENT OR GUARDIAN OF THE STUDENT.**

17 **(2) A PERSON MAY NOT ESTABLISH A REGULATION, RULE, POLICY, OR**
18 **PRACTICE OR PROVIDE FORMAL, INFORMAL, WRITTEN, OR ORAL GUIDANCE,**
19 **INCLUDING ANY PART OF A TRAINING, TO RESTRICT OR DIMINISH AN INDIVIDUAL'S**
20 **AUTHORITY UNDER THIS SUBSECTION OR TO DETER AN INDIVIDUAL FROM**
21 **LAWFULLY EXERCISING THE INDIVIDUAL'S AUTHORITY UNDER THIS SUBSECTION.**

22 **[(d)] (E) (1)** Before an individual participates in an authorized athletic
23 activity on school property, the county board shall provide, or require that a third party
24 provide:

25 (i) Information on concussions and head injuries to the individual
26 and, if applicable, a parent or guardian of the individual; and

27 (ii) Notice that acknowledgment of the receipt of the information by
28 the individual and, if applicable, the parent or guardian of the individual, is required.

29 (2) The information required under paragraph (1) of this subsection shall
30 be in the form of:

31 (i) A separate information sheet; or

1 (ii) A notice on the registration form for a youth sports program
2 stating that information on concussion and head injury is available, including directions on
3 how to receive the information electronically.

4 (3) The individual and, if applicable, the parent or guardian of the
5 individual shall:

6 (i) Acknowledge receipt of the information by:

7 1. Signature;

8 2. Checking an acknowledgment box on the registration
9 form; or

10 3. Another method of written or electronic acknowledgment;
11 and

12 (ii) Return the acknowledgment to the county board or third party.

13 **[(e)] (F)** A youth sports program that uses a public school facility shall provide
14 annually to the county board or the board's agent a statement of intent to comply for all of
15 its athletic activities with the requirements for the management of a concussion or other
16 head injury of a participant under this section.

17 **(G) A PERSON MAY BRING AN ACTION FOR DECLARATORY RELIEF IN**
18 **ACCORDANCE WITH THE MARYLAND UNIFORM DECLARATORY JUDGMENTS ACT TO**
19 **ENFORCE THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION.**

20 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
21 1, 2026.