



ALASKA SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION

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February 21, 2014

Representative Kurt Olson
Committee Chair
Labor and Commerce
State Capitol Rm 24
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: SUPPORT FOR HB 160 (THOMPSON)

Dear Representative Olson,

I am Gary Matthews, Executive Director of Alaska School Activities Association (ASAA), and I am writing to urge you to vote yes on **HB 160 (THOMPSON)**. The "Act relating to the licensing and regulation of athletic trainers" would provide for the licensure and regulation of athletic trainers.

As an administrator, I am concerned for the health and safety of our young athletes throughout the state. With high school athletes suffering from 2 million injuries, 500,000 doctor visits, and 30,000 hospitalizations each year and the fact that there have been more than 372 deaths of young athletes in the last four years throughout the country, we must do a better job of providing them with a safe environment. I believe that the passage of this bill will save lives.

Currently in Alaska, *anyone* can call themselves an athletic trainer without having the proper qualifications. There are countless unqualified individuals across the state posing as athletic trainers and making medical decisions every day. The number of young athletes sustaining severe or multiple injuries continues to increase every year. There is no better time than *now* to guarantee that these young athletes have properly trained and educated individuals providing them medical care and responding to emergencies on the sidelines.

I have had the privilege of working with a number of certified athletic trainers during my career. The knowledge that I have a highly educated and trained individual on staff that will provide appropriate on-site medical care in emergency and non-emergency cases to my athletes is invaluable.

Passage of this bill is the only way for administrators, parents and coaches to know that the individual responding to emergency situations and providing medical care to young athletes is qualified to do so.

This bill will save lives at **no cost to the state, school district or hard working taxpayers**. For the safety and welfare of our athletes and children, **I urge you to vote yes on HB 160.**

Sincerely,

Gary Matthews
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