

By: Representative Powell

To: Public Health and Human Services; Accountability, Efficiency, Transparency

HOUSE BILL NO. 1173

1 AN ACT TO BE KNOWN AS THE "MISSISSIPPI COACH SAFELY ACT"; TO
 2 DEFINE CERTAIN TERMS; TO REQUIRE A YOUTH ATHLETICS ASSOCIATION
 3 CONDUCTING HIGH RISK YOUTH ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN UNDER
 4 AGE 15 TO REQUIRE COACHES AND ATHLETIC PERSONNEL TO ANNUALLY
 5 COMPLETE A YOUTH INJURY MITIGATION AND INFORMATION COURSE APPROVED
 6 BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH; TO PROVIDE A DEFENSE FROM
 7 LIABILITY FOR A YOUTH ATHLETE'S INJURY IN A HIGH RISK ATHLETIC
 8 ACTIVITY FOR ATHLETIC PERSONNEL AND COACHES WHO HAVE COMPLETED THE
 9 COURSE AND REASONABLY USED SAFETY TECHNIQUES AND METHODS TAUGHT IN
 10 THE COURSE; TO REQUIRE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO ADOPT
 11 RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COACH SAFELY ACT;
 12 AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

13 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

14 **SECTION 1.** This act shall be known and may be cited as the
 15 "Mississippi Coach Safely Act."

16 **SECTION 2.** For the purposes of this act, the following words
 17 and phrases have the meanings ascribed in this section unless the
 18 context clearly requires otherwise:

19 (a) "Association" means an organization that
 20 administers or conducts high risk youth athletic activities on
 21 property owned, leased, managed or maintained by the state, an
 22 agent of the state, or a political subdivision or district of the
 23 state, including a public school district.



24 (b) "Athletics personnel" means athletic directors and
25 other individuals actively involved in organizing, training or
26 coaching sports activities for individuals age fourteen (14) years
27 and under.

28 (c) "Coach" means an individual, whether paid, unpaid,
29 volunteer or interim, who is approved by the association to
30 organize, train or supervise a youth athlete or team of youth
31 athletes. If an individual approved by the association is
32 unavailable, the term "coach" may include an individual selected
33 by a youth athlete or a team of youth athletes who is not approved
34 by the association.

35 (d) "High risk youth athletic activity" means an
36 organized sport in which there is a significant possibility for a
37 youth athlete to sustain a serious physical injury, including, but
38 not limited to, the sports of football, basketball, baseball,
39 volleyball, soccer, ice or field hockey, cheerleading and
40 lacrosse.

41 (e) "Youth athlete" means an individual age fourteen
42 (14) years or younger participating in an organized sport.

43 **SECTION 3.** (1) A youth athletics association that sponsors
44 or conducts sports training or high risk youth athletic activities
45 for children age fourteen (14) years and younger shall require all
46 coaches and athletics personnel to complete an online or residence
47 youth injury mitigation and information course approved by the
48 State Department of Health, if available at no cost, which



49 provides information and awareness of actions and measures that
50 may be used to decrease the likelihood that a youth athlete will
51 sustain a serious injury while engaged or participating in a high
52 risk youth athletic activity.

53 (2) A youth injury mitigation and information course
54 required to be taken by a coach or athletics personnel under this
55 section must provide, at a minimum, information on the following
56 subjects:

57 (a) Emergency preparedness, planning and rehearsal for
58 traumatic injuries.

59 (b) Concussions and head trauma.

60 (c) Heat and extreme weather related injury
61 familiarization.

62 (d) Physical conditioning and training equipment usage.

63 (e) Heart defects and abnormalities leading to sudden
64 cardiac death.

65 (3) An individual required to take an injury mitigation and
66 information course under this section must complete the course no
67 later than thirty (30) days after becoming actively engaged in, or
68 serving as, athletics personnel or a coach for the association.

69 (4) A youth athletics association that conducts high risk
70 youth athletic activities or events which requires coaches and
71 athletics personnel to complete an injury mitigation and
72 information course under this section shall maintain a record of



73 each individual's course completion for as long as the individual
74 serves as athletics personnel or a coach for the association.

75 (5) The course requirement under this section is an annual
76 requirement that must be completed not later than the anniversary
77 of the date on which the individual actively became engaged in
78 serving as athletics personnel or a coach for the association.

79 (6) All licensed and certified athletic trainers, doctors,
80 nurses, first responders, and health care professionals with acute
81 traumatic life support training are exempt from the course
82 requirements under this section.

83 (7) This act may not be construed to eliminate the
84 involvement of athletic trainers at youth athletic events.

85 (8) This act may not be construed to impose additional
86 liability upon political subdivisions and districts of this state.

87 (9) Athletics personnel and coaches are entitled to a
88 defense from liability for an injury sustained by a youth athlete
89 as a result of participation in a high risk youth athletic
90 activity upon establishing that they completed the youth injury
91 mitigation and information course described in subsection (1) of
92 this section and that they reasonably conformed their conduct to
93 the safety techniques and methods identified in the course.

94 (10) Before January 1, 2025, the State Department of Health
95 shall adopt such rules and regulations as may be necessary for the
96 purpose of implementing, enforcing and administering this act.



97 **SECTION 4.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
98 and after July 1, 2024.

