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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

May 13, 2021

Honorable Kate Brown
Office of the Governor
900 Court Street, NE
Suite 254
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Governor Brown,

I am writing to bring to your attention a serious incident which occurred in my district and urge your help to prevent alarming events of similar nature in the future.

The episode involves a 16-year old female student-athlete who collapsed during high school basketball tryouts. The student had trouble breathing with her face covering, suffered from a lack of oxygen, ultimately lost consciousness, and for a time *stopped breathing*. A great coach administered CPR, and the young athlete was transported to the local emergency room where, thankfully, she fully recovered. A detailed account of the incident is attached for your review. You can make sure this never happens again.

I believe the time has come to fully revisit the mask-mandate for high school student-athletes, particularly in sports with the potential for high intensity, high aerobic output such as basketball. As you know, this is not the first instance of a young athlete collapsing due to a lack of oxygen from masks, and I fear it won't be the last. Last month you and the Oregon Health Authority acted swiftly and appropriately when you revised the mask mandate for athletes competing in outdoor non-contact sports. As our population moves towards "herd immunity," it's time to take the next step and revisit the mandate for indoor sports, which has started in full around the state. Just like professional sports, we can keep our kids safe without risking their health with restricted airflow.

Various models exist for students to compete in extracurricular activities safely. In some states - Pennsylvania for example - each school is given the discretion to develop its own mask policy. Many of Pennsylvania's high school teams do not require masks while actively competing. In South Carolina, Governor McMaster recently issued an order preventing school districts from requiring face coverings for student athletes; instead choosing to leave the choice to parents. Other states delegate decision-making to local jurisdictions or school districts. Oregon is now at a place where we can safely extend this freedom to our school districts and/or parents, who ultimately have the best interest of their children in mind and should be in charge of their well-being.

At this point in the pandemic, various tools exist for families to protect themselves and their loved ones. During this pandemic, you have shown the willingness to revisit decisions based on new information and avoid unintended consequences. We are experiencing unintended consequences and will doubtless see more instances like this one from my district. It is time to revisit this decision and prevent the possibility of this near tragedy happening to others.

You are in a difficult position as you try to weigh the right approach for balancing public health, economic impact, and personal freedoms related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the safety of Oregonians. I urge you to carefully consider our youth's ability to safely participate in sports.

It is time to make the appropriate changes and give communities, schools, and parents the ability to choose how best to keep their kids safe.

Respectfully,



Vikki Breese Iverson
State Representative
House District 55

Enclosure (1)

cc: Patrick Allen, Oregon Health Authority
Colt Gill, Oregon Department of Education
Peter Weber, Oregon School Activities Association

Rep Breese-Iverson

From: Jess Lay <jess@signetrealtygroup.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 2:28 PM
To: Rep Breese-Iverson
Subject: Revised:letter

Hi Vikki,

Last night at basketball tryouts Savannah was complaining about not being able to breath so her coach told her she could go to the locker room to catch her breath (because they don't let them pull it down due to the mask mandate). The assistant coaches are always telling them to put it above their noses. She went into the locker room so she could pull her mask down to breath. She felt like she was suffocating and couldn't catch her breath. She laid down on the floor and was trying to catch her breath when a fellow player came into the room. She sat up and the player asked if she was okay. She said no and then passed out. The player ran and got the assistant coaches and they ran in and could not find a pulse and Savannah was unconscious. One of the assistant coaches then started administering CPR while the other ones called 911. They put her face up to the mirror to see if there was any breath and there was not. After doing CPR she came to for a second and then went back out all the while they were communicating with 911 dispatchers. The first responder was a Prineville PD and he assessed the scene and immediately administered Narcan (generally used to jolt someone out of a drug overdose) she immediately came to and had no idea where she was. Paramedics got there and got her on the stretcher to take her to the hospital. I got the call that she was unresponsive and I needed to get to the school asap. Then the coach called me back and said go to the hospital not the school. I live 15 minutes from the school so I knew it was going to take me a while to get there. Once I got there they took me back, she was responsive. She had a massive headache but was jittery from the narcan and extra talkative. At the time I had no idea she was given the narcan. The ER didn't say anything about it. They ran blood tests, EKG, and X-rays on her ribs because a week prior she had mentioned her ribs hurt and she couldn't breath when she was running. The tests all came back perfect. Nothing was wrong. The ER doctor looked me straight in the face and said she is perfectly healthy, this was an isolated incidence due to excursion and wearing a masks during sports. They released us and told us to rest the next day.

What will it take for people to wake up? We have to keep our kids safe. Is it going to take an athlete dying before they start to change these mask mandates at the State level. Something has got to be done. My daughter is a perfectly healthy freshman who plays multiple sports all year long, and has since she was 5-years old. She has never had anything like this happen, ever. I have been a basketball coach for over 16 years and I have never seen anything like this. I played basketball all through school and I can't even imagine having to wear a mask running up and down the court.

If the NBA and collegiate level doesn't have to wear a mask when they play, and our youth (which are extremely less susceptible to covid19) have to something is wrong with that.

If her story can help make a change, I am willing to advocate for the safety of our youth.

Why should these kids have to give up their season?

Jessica Lay

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