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The Honorable Rep. Joseph M. McNamara  
Chair, Rhode Island House Committee on Education  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith St.  
Providence, RI 02903

**Re: Oppose as drafted, House Bill 5087**

Dear Chair McNamara:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on H5087 - Children's Cardiac Safety Act. To be certain, the cardiac safety of children is an important concern for education and public health alike. However, the requirement of a pre-participation physical may not be the most effective way to address it, according to the research from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). **As such, unfortunately, as currently drafted, RIDE must oppose the current H5087.** Here is a summary of the agency's concerns.

- *Sudden cardiac arrest among competitive athletes during exercise is a rare event, usually but not always associated with underlying cardiac pathology.*
- *Exercise is an effective way to moderate overall cardiac risk in the population, but it is paradoxically both risky and beneficial for people with pre-existing heart disease, though the benefits outweigh the risks.*
- ***Exercise may increase the rate of sudden cardiac arrest in athletes with pre-existing cardiac conditions; however, this is difficult to predict or prevent, which means that screening athletes for underlying cardiac pathology is complex, challenging and of uncertain benefit.***
- *A recent Canadian position statement recommends a tiered approach to pre-participation screening, advises against the routine use of electrocardiography as a screening tool, and emphasizes the importance of shared decision-making when considering whether to continue or withdraw from competitive sport.*
- ***Establishing effective resuscitation protocols and increasing the availability of automated external defibrillators in settings where competitive sport is undertaken are the most effective strategies in helping reduce the incidence of sudden cardiac death among athletes.***

Given the findings from NIH, attention to existing requirements in statute regarding staff trained in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) as well as automated external defibrillator (AED) requirements should be emphasized particularly ensuring that AEDs are available both when and where competitive sports occur.

The fiscal impact includes the time and resources to create a common physical form, development of the training module and pamphlet, distribution of materials and assuring utilization of the same.

Thank you for considering this feedback. If there are any questions or additional information would be useful, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Rosemary Reilly-Chammat, Ed.D.  
Director, Office of School Health and Wellness

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Education  
The Honorable Lauren Carson  
Nicole McCarty, Esq. Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House