



-Letter of Opposition-
California Youth Tackle Football Protection Act
“HUDDLE UP CALIFORNIA”

Dear Golden Empire Family

On February 9, 2018, two California legislators, Kevin McCarty (D-Sacramento), and Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher (D-San Diego) announced a bill called the Safe Youth Football Act that proposes the lawful ban of youth tackle football statewide.

As an organization and community steeped in rich football tradition, Golden Empire Youth Tackle Football vehemently stands in opposition to this type of unwarranted governmental overreach and personal intrusion into the lives of its constituents.

We find this proposed legislation to be without merit and site the following reasons below:

1. No major medical association or medical society has suggested age restrictions on when a child may begin playing tackle football. According to the **American Academy of Pediatrics'** most recent policy statement on Tackling in Youth Football, lack of experience with tackling and being tackled may lead to an increase in the number and severity of injuries once tackling is introduced in a post youth tackle football environment, i.e., high school or above.
2. The proposed legislation is based on an antiquated thought process as it relates to youth tackle football today. The Youth Tackle Football landscape has significantly improved in the last (6) years in the following areas.
 - A. USA FOOTBALL - National Governing Body for industry oversight.
 - B. Multiple age appropriate consumer entry points.
 - C. State wide reduction and monitoring of contact.
 - D. Revised contact teaching & playing principals.
 - E. Substantial Game Rule Modifications & Revisions.
 - F. State wide Return to Play and Return to Learn Safety Protocols.
 - G. Annual mandated coach's certification and Player Safety Clinics.
 - H. Development of organizational Player Safety Directors.
 - I. Annual mandated Concussion Awareness and Medical Training.
 - J. Continued education and required participation in instructional clinics.
 - K. Considerable Innovations in protective equipment and fitting process.
 - L. Continuous research and development in protective equipment.

- M. Mandated Equipment Recertification and established product shelf – life.
- N. Expanded and comprehensive NOSCAE helmet testing process.

3. This proposed legislation **specifically targets youth tackle football** when concussion and overall injury rates are actually higher in girls' soccer and exceptionally high in many other contact and non - contact activities.

In addition, both McCarty and Gonzalez Fletcher are recommending flag football replace youth tackle as a safer alternative, simply put, flag football is not a safer alternative and statistically in conflict with the largest youth football study ever conducted out of Iowa by Dr. Andrew Peterson. The results of this recent study showed that injuries were more likely to occur in youth flag football than in tackle football. Research also found that the number of injuries in youth football is relatively low overall.

4. McCarty and Gonzalez Fletcher have made public claims that participating in youth tackle football will lead to later neurological issues and potentially CTE (Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy) due to “accumulative sub concussive blows” sustained while participating in youth tackle football. To be very clear on this assertion, there is absolutely no medical or scientific consensus that supports such reckless and unfounded claims. There is no known correlation nor causation that links CTE to playing youth tackle football.
5. Youth Tackle Football embodies diversity and inclusiveness in that it levels all demographic boundaries (e.g. economic, ethnic, racial, religious, etc. and brings communities together like no other sport or activity).
6. Denying access to such positive influences during a young athlete's formative years of emotional and social development would be an injustice to the very children who this misguided proposed legislation purports to serve.
7. Finally, the importance of organized youth tackle football participation in the lives of hundreds of thousands of young athletes throughout California each year cannot be overlooked. Many youth athletes who play tackle football do so in an attempt to rise above underserved communities in which they reside.

As an elected activity, we believe that parents not legislators are best suited to discern what sports their children should participate in and at what age to do so.

Please join Golden Empire and young athletes, coaches and parents throughout California in preventing the passage of this proposal and keeping youth tackle football an option for all youth athletes in our great State for years to come!

GOLDEN EMPIRE YOUTH TACKLE FOOTBALL
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- Representing 3,800 CA Youth Participants -

