

1 State of Arkansas
2 94th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2023
4

A Bill

SENATE BILL 421

5 By: Senator G. Leding
6 By: Representative K. Moore
7

For An Act To Be Entitled

9 AN ACT TO CREATE THE COACH SAFELY ACT; TO REQUIRE
10 YOUTH INJURY MITIGATION AND INFORMATION COURSES FOR
11 ATHLETICS PERSONNEL AND COACHES; AND FOR OTHER
12 PURPOSES.
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Subtitle

15 TO CREATE THE COACH SAFELY ACT; AND TO
16 REQUIRE YOUTH INJURY MITIGATION AND
17 INFORMATION COURSES FOR ATHLETICS
18 PERSONNEL AND COACHES.
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22 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
23

24 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 18, Subchapter 7, is amended
25 to add an additional section to read as follows:

26 6-18-720. Coach Safely Act.

27 (a) This section shall be known and may be cited as the “Coach Safely
28 Act”.

29 (b) As used in this section:

30 (1) “Association” means an organization that administers or
31 conducts high-risk youth athletic activities on property that is owned,
32 leased, managed, or maintained by the state, an agent of the state, or a
33 political subdivision of the state;

34 (2) “Athletics personnel” means athletic directors and other
35 individuals actively involved in organizing, training, or coaching athletic
36 activities for individuals who are fourteen (14) years of age or younger;



1 (3)(A) “Coach” means any individual, whether paid, unpaid,
2 volunteer, or interim, who has been approved by an association to organize,
3 train, or supervise a youth athlete or team of youth athletes.

4 (B) “Coach” may include without limitation an individual
5 selected by a youth athlete or a team of youth athletes who has not been
6 approved by an association if the individual approved by an association is
7 unavailable;

8 (4) “High-risk youth athletic activities” means any organized
9 sport in which there is a significant possibility for a youth athlete to
10 sustain a serious physical injury, including without limitation the sports of
11 football, basketball, baseball, volleyball, soccer, ice or field hockey,
12 cheerleading, and lacrosse; and

13 (5) “Youth athlete” means an individual who is fourteen (14)
14 years of age or younger and participates in an organized sport.

15 (c) Any association that sponsors or conducts sports training or high-
16 risk youth athletic activities for children who are fourteen (14) years of
17 age and younger shall require all coaches and athletics personnel to complete
18 an online or residence course approved by the Department of Health, if
19 available at no cost, which provides information and awareness of actions and
20 measures that may be used to decrease the likelihood that a youth athlete
21 will sustain a serious injury while engaged or participating in a high-risk
22 youth athletic activity.

23 (d) Any youth injury mitigation and information course described under
24 subsection (c) of this section shall provide information on the following
25 subjects without limitation:

26 (1) Emergency preparedness, planning, and rehearsal for
27 traumatic injuries;

28 (2) Concussions and head trauma;

29 (3) Heat and extreme weather-related injury
30 familiarization;

31 (4) Physical conditioning and training equipment usage;
32 and

33 (5) Heart defects and abnormalities leading to sudden
34 cardiac death.

35 (e) Any individual required to take a youth injury mitigation and
36 information course under this section shall complete the course within thirty

1 (30) days of becoming actively engaged in or serving as part of the athletics
2 personnel or coaching staff for an association.

3 (f) An association that conducts a high-risk youth athletic activity
4 or event that requires a coach or an athletics personnel member to complete a
5 youth injury mitigation and information course under this section shall
6 maintain a record of individual course completion for as long as that
7 individual serves as athletic personnel or coach for the association.

8 (g) The youth injury mitigation and information course requirement
9 under this section shall be an annual requirement to be completed no later
10 than the anniversary of the date on which the individual became actively
11 engaged in serving as athletic personnel or coach for an association.

12 (h) All licensed and certified athletic trainers, doctors, nurses,
13 first responders, and healthcare professionals with acute traumatic life
14 support training are exempt from the youth injury mitigation and information
15 course requirement under this section.

16 (i) This section does not:

17 (1) Eliminate the involvement of athletic trainers at youth
18 athletic events; or

19 (2) Impose any additional liability upon political subdivisions
20 of this state.

21 (j) An athletics personnel member or coach is entitled to a defense
22 from liability for any injury sustained by a youth athlete as a result of
23 participation in a high-risk youth athletic activity upon establishing that
24 the athletics personnel member or coach:

25 (1) Completed the injury mitigation and information course
26 required under subsection (c) of this section; and

27 (2) Reasonably conformed his or her conduct to the safety
28 techniques and methods identified in the injury mitigation and information
29 course.

30 (k) Within one hundred eighty (180) days of the effective date of this
31 section, the Department of Health shall adopt rules to implement, enforce,
32 and administer this section.

33 (l) This section shall not apply to:

34 (1) A licensed teacher with a coaching endorsement on the
35 licensed teacher's teaching license;

36 (2) A licensed teacher who completes the Arkansas Activities

1 Association and National Federation of State High School Associations
2 coaching endorsement program; or

3 (3) A registered volunteer under the Arkansas Registered
4 Volunteers Program Act, § 6-22-101 et seq., who completes the Arkansas
5 Activities Association and National Federation of State High School
6 Associations coaching endorsement program.

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8 SECTION 2. DO NOT CODIFY. Rules.

9 (a) When adopting the initial rules required under this act, the
10 Department of Health shall file the final rules with the Secretary of State
11 for adoption under § 25-15-204(f):

12 (1) On or before January 1, 2024; or

13 (2) If approval under § 10-3-309 has not occurred by January 1,
14 2024, as soon as practicable after approval under § 10-3-309.

15 (b) The department shall file the proposed rules with the Legislative
16 Council under § 10-3-309(c) sufficiently in advance of January 1, 2024, so
17 that the Legislative Council may consider the rules for approval before
18 January 1, 2024.