

Testimony in Favor of HB 1185

To Whom it May Concern,

My Name is Marc Mesaros and I am the President of the Maryland Football Coaches Association. I am in support of HB 1185, as is the vast majority of our organization. The MFCA represents member schools spanning the state, as well as a significant number of youth coaches. Our cause is to support football programs and the coaches who lead those programs in Maryland. We provide supplemental insurance, professional development opportunities for our coaches, and work to promote football players in the state of Maryland through our continued participation in the Big 33 All-Star game. Another important function of the MFCA is advocacy; we are dedicated to supporting the sport of football in our state, and actively monitor legislation that might affect the ability for young people and communities to participate in this great game. We have testified before the Ways and Means Committee for the last few years either in support of or against bills regarding the sport of football.

Today, I write to each of you in support of House Bill 1185. This bill would allow student-athletes who are seniors to reclassify and play another year of high school athletics. Due to COVID-19 restrictions on high school athletics in our state, hundreds of athletes have missed the opportunity to be recruitable. They have no senior-season film, and academically, some have experienced a severe drop in their grades and academic development due to the virtual environment that most school districts implemented during the pandemic. These student athletes have had to endure these hardships and will lose the opportunities that they may have had access to in previous years through no fault of their own. Additionally, the pandemic has impacted communities of color very severely, and this crisis will disproportionately affect student athletes from these communities and their ability to compete for the same opportunities as students from more affluent areas of the state. This is an unacceptable result.

This bill would provide senior student-athletes who chose to reclassify the opportunity to improve their academic transcript and compete on the field of play for fair access to athletic scholarships. As president of the Maryland Football Coaches Association, I wholeheartedly support this bill because it levels the playing field for all students to compete for the same opportunities, even if they go to school in an area of the state where the pandemic has limited their access to a better education and life after football. No bill is perfect, and this one is not as well; there are several things that should be considered before this bill became a law. The members of the legislature should discuss amendments and improvements to HB 1185, and the Maryland Football Coaches Association is a willing partner and would love to be a part of those discussions. We believe that those discussions could result in a bill that offers more opportunity for student athletes across the state of Maryland.

Sincerely,

Marc Mesaros
President, Maryland Football Coaches Association
410-276-9610
marcmfca@gmail.com
Position: In Favor