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HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII, IN CONSULTATION WITH MEDICAL AND BRAIN INJURY EXPERTS, TO WORK WITH THE ATHLETIC COMMUNITY TO DEVELOP A STATEWIDE CONCUSSION PREVENTION AND AWARENESS PROGRAM FOR YOUNG ATHLETES.

WHEREAS, closed head injuries, also known as concussions, are a serious and growing public health issue for athletes involved in contact sports; and

WHEREAS, mild concussions can be difficult to detect and, along with more serious head injuries, can have long-term effects such as memory loss, impairments in attention, and motor deficits; and

WHEREAS, the culture of playing through pain or "toughing it out" can put athletes at risk, and allowing an athlete to return to play too early after a concussion increases the chance of more serious brain injury; and

WHEREAS, concussions have a cumulative effect and each concussion makes a person more vulnerable to another concussion; and

WHEREAS, when a second concussion follows shortly after an initial one, it can cause rapid brain swelling that can result in coma or even death in rare cases; and

WHEREAS, recent research reveals that multiple concussions may also lead to clinical depression; and

WHEREAS, five to eight per cent of athletes in state public high school suffer concussions each year; and

WHEREAS, at the high school level, football is the riskiest sport when it comes to concussions, followed by girls soccer; and

WHEREAS, awareness about the prevention, identification, and treatment of concussions is lacking; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-fourth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2008, that the Department of Education and the University of Hawaii are requested to work with the State's athletic community, in consultation with medical and brain injury experts, to develop a statewide concussion prevention and awareness program directed at young athletes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the goal of such a program would be to educate student athletes, parents, educators, athletic directors, and the general public about the symptoms and dangers of concussion and to encourage concussion prevention; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the architects of the program are requested to recommend strategies for program implementation; and

 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Superintendent of Education, the Chairperson of the Board of Education, the President of the University of Hawaii, the President of the Hawaii Medical Association, the Executive Director of the Hawaii High School Athletic Association, and the President of the Brain Injury Association of Hawaii.

OFFERED BY: Marily 3. Lee

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