



State of Connecticut

SENATE

STATE CAPITOL
300 CAPITOL AVENUE
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591
SENATE REPUBLICAN OFFICES

September 8, 2020

Dr. Dierdre Gifford
Acting Commissioner
Department of Public Health
410 Capitol Ave.
Hartford CT 06134

Dear Dr. Gifford:

We are writing to more fully understand the Department of Public Health's (DPH) opposition to full-contact football this fall and obtain more information on your decision-making process and the metrics that you believe need to be achieved in order to allow football to be played.

First, obviously your decision to recommend against playing football certainly is the safest decision and provides for zero risk. However, it seems that there should be more required of DPH to assess and weigh the risks and provide a more detailed analysis and recommended solutions. Anyone without medical knowledge could make the safest decision possible and recommend not doing something entirely. But DPH must be held to a higher standard as we navigate through uncharted territory.

Second, there must be specific metrics and rationale that went into the guidance you communicated that led to the recommendation to cancel contact football for the upcoming season. The infection rate in Connecticut has held at 1% or lower over the last several weeks, hospitalizations have been around 60 to 65 people out of 3.5 million residents, and daily deaths have either been well under 10 and some days no deaths have been reported. These improving numbers beg the question what are the metrics in which football could be played? A 0% infection rate is likely never a possibility until a vaccine is available and equally true waiting until there are zero hospitalizations is not realistic. Infection rates are currently at 0.8%. So what rate between 0% and 0.8% do we as a state need to reach for you to consider Connecticut safe enough for football? As the health agency for the state surely you have examined those numbers and you now have an affirmative obligation to disclose those numbers to the parents, children, coaches and the public.

Third, we hope that in developing those metrics you have taken into account the physiological and other health risks that school children are facing during this pandemic. It has been well documented that depression, drug abuse, family violence as well as other adverse health issues have been increasing and are serious issues facing many of our young residents. We expect that your analysis included these concerns, and we would appreciate an explanation, from your point of view, how balance was achieved in your decision-making process when weighing these issues and risks. Please provide such rationale.

Fourth, we understand that the Department of Public Health advised the CIAC to make modifications to its policies to enable a football season to move forward, and the CIAC has stated that there is no way to meet the requirements issued by DPH. Please provide us with all guidance that was provided, what was requested of the CIAC, and what could not be met.

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And finally, we understand that Representative Vincent Candelora sent you a letter on this issue some time ago and he never received a response. Given the fact that your analysis has already been completed we expect that you can answer all questions presented in his letter. We also share many of those questions and ask that you please provide such answers no later than Thursday, September 10 at noon.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Len Fasano
Senate Republican Leader



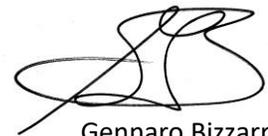
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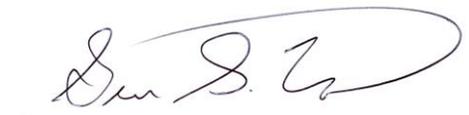
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