

Public Health Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: SB-194 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING CARDIAC SCREENING AND SUDDEN CARDIAC
Title: ARREST PREVENTION FOR CERTAIN STUDENT ATHLETES.

Vote Date: 3/23/2026

Vote Action: JFS

PH Date: 2/18/2026

File No.:

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Public Health Committee.

REASONS FOR BILL:

To strengthen the screening of high school students who participate in interscholastic sports for any potential health conditions that could result in serious and/or deadly outcomes, this bill requires that high school students participating in interscholastic sports undergo a physical exam that would screen for serious cardiac conditions. The assessment must be conducted by a health professional and include a form that asks for family history regarding cardiac symptoms or history of sudden cardiac death. The student as well as a parent or guardian would need to answer these questions. The provider may ask additional screening questions and based on the assessment, indicate whether an electrocardiogram (EKG) had been conducted, or the student was referred for an EKG including additional screening or treatment. The bill also provides for extending these health assessments to current student health assessments i.e. the student is eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

Requires a cardiac screening for all student athletes not just high intensity endurance or power sports and requires these students take an EKG. In addition, if the assessment reported any family history of cardiac symptoms or a related family history, the student is to have an EKG and get medical clearance before resuming the sport.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Seth Lapuk, MD, Pediatric Cardiologist, Connecticut Children's:

Dr. Lapuk strongly supports efforts to strengthen our students' heart-safe environments. However, he has concerns that the proposed EKG requirements are not likely to achieve the intended impact and instead may introduce unintended consequences. Dr. Lapuk points out that while certain cardiac conditions may carry increased risk, the presence of underlying heart disease does not mean that sports participation alone is the primary reason for the risk. The predictive value of most elements of the standard questionnaire is limited and only then for very specific high-risk indicators. In addition, an abnormal EKG would require evaluation by a cardiologist and many families do not have access to specialty care. Expanding such mandates may impact families with fewer resources and result in inequities in sports participation.

Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS):

CSMS supports the goal of this legislation, however, points out that an already well-established and comprehensive pre-participation athletic physical exam is available in Connecticut. The form involved in the exam is known as the "blue form" and is available through the CT State Department of Education (SDE). The form must be completed by a licensed medical professional before a student can participate in school sports. Questions on the form address the same issues as included in this bill regarding chest pain and relevant family history. For this reason, CSMS believes that this bill would only create a parallel screening process that duplicates what is already captured in the current system. CSMS urges the committee to consider the consequences of creating a confusing dual screening system.

Jim Williams, Director, Government Relations, American Heart Association:

The Association supports the intent of this bill but respectfully urges consideration of amended language. The reference to "high-intensity and endurance or power sport" should be removed and replaced to include all sports. In addition, the ECG/EKG may not be the appropriate next step if something is flagged in pre-screening. The next step needs to be determined by a quality health care professional. Since there is already a timeline and process for sports physicals in Connecticut, we urge avoiding duplication of effort and potential confusion. We recommend amending the current process. Realizing that there are advancements and updates, the Association recommends enhancing the current system by including the following language to be part of this legislation: "The SDE, in consultation with the state DPH, shall adopt rules and regulations to effectuate the purposes of this act and follow nationally recognized, evidence-based guidelines recommended by organizations focused on cardiovascular care in pediatric populations".

Brian Malm, MD, Governor, CT Chapter of the American College of Cardiology:

The organization commends the committee for taking steps to codify the pre-participation screening process for students to safely participate in school sports. However, as currently drafted, SB 194 does not fully align with established evidence-based science and may not achieve the goals it seeks. SB 194 removes clinical discretion from medical providers and assigns follow-up to a single test. The organization strongly recommends revising the language to ensure that any follow-up evaluation is determined by qualified healthcare professionals and aligns with evidence-based guidelines. In addition, they urge that any recommendations apply to all sports not just high intensity endurance or power sports.

Rachal Lampert, Cardiologist at Yale, representing the Ct Chapter of the American College of Cardiology:

Dr. Lampert believes that SB 194 will establish an additional and parallel process to the one currently in place. This will only serve to cause confusion with no additional benefit. As written, SB 194 shifts the responsibility for completing forms onto the parents and coaches instead of medical professionals. Neither are medical experts, nor should they be involved in this medical process. She urges the committee to amend the bill to formalize what is already being done rather than create a separate less effective process.

The following individuals submitted testimony in support of this legislation and included personal experiences:

- Mike Papale, President and CEO of In a Heartbeat.
- Logan Lombardi-Bole, Lived experience expert.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Glenn Lungarini, Ed.D, Executive Director, CT Interscholastic Athletic Conference, The CT Association of Schools (CAS CIAC):

CAS-CIAC respectfully opposes this bill as currently written as it would create a separate cardiac screening form in addition to the form already in place and would assign coaches the responsibility to collect and receive medical documentation. The CIAC produces a Medical Handbook that outlines the necessary medical documentations, including sudden cardiac arrest education, and return- to- paly clearance that is overseen by qualified medical personnel and coordinates with athletic directors and certified athletic trainers. The Handbook explicitly states that medical notes are to be given to the school nurse or athletic trainer not the coaches. This ensures that medical professionals retain the authority to override participation decisions when there are documented safety concerns. "Coaches are educators and activity supervisors; they are not qualified to interpret cardiac histories, assess the adequacy of EKG results, or judge medical documentation". Finally, CAS-CIAC requests that enhancements to cardiac screening build on, rather than duplicate systems already in place in our schools.

Leonard Corto, Executive Director, CT High School Coaches Association (CHSCA):

The CHSCA believes there is already a more appropriate and efficient mechanism in place to collect any additional cardiac screening data as is proposed in this bill. The SDE currently requires completion of the "blue form" before any student may participate in a school sport. This form mandates a comprehensive submission of medical information across a broad-spectrum of categories. Rather than creating a duplicate process, the better approach would be to amend the existing assessment with any new screening requirements.

Fred Balsamo, CMAA, Executive Director of the CT Association of Athletic Directors (CAAD):

CAAD appreciates the goal of the committee but believes it can be achieved by enhancing the existing state health forms and ensuring that medical documentation remains under the supervision of qualified school health professionals.

Kenneth Oliver, Connecticut resident:

Mr. Oliver no longer trusts the government to do the right thing. He believes this bill is well meaning but he “ does not trust the government after the way COVID was handled”. He also shared that: “This bill reads like a mandate, and I do not support that by a long shot”.

Reported by: Kathleen Panazza

Date: March 24, 2026