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Senate Bill 278 (Substitute S-2 as passed by the Senate)  
Sponsor: Senator Bill Schuette  
Committee: Education

Date Completed: 11-15-01

### **RATIONALE**

According to the Red Cross, about 11 million injuries put American youths in the hospital every year. Of these injuries, it is reported that 2.6 million, including an estimated 92,000 in Michigan, are sport-related. In the interest of preventing and responding to injuries and accidents, the American Red Cross provides training to the public in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), first aid, and sport safety, among other subjects. Currently, in Michigan, there are approximately 20,000 people certified in first aid and CPR and about 5,000 people certified in sport safety training. Because of the number of sport-related injuries and the success of the Red Cross training programs, some people believe that public school athletic coaches should obtain training in sport safety.

### **CONTENT**

The bill would amend the Revised School Code to require that school athletic coaches hold valid certification in sport safety training. The board of a school district or public school academy would have to require each new person it employed or assigned as an interscholastic athletic coach to meet this requirement.

Coaches would have to complete training in sport safety offered by the American Red Cross or complete an equivalent course approved by the State Board of Education. Certification would be current during the entire interscholastic season for the athletic activity a person was coaching. At least once every two years, coaches would have to provide documentation to their school board or board of directors demonstrating their valid, continuing certification. If a coach did not provide this documentation, the board could not allow him or her to coach an interscholastic athletic activity.

People already employed or serving as interscholastic coaches on or before the effective date of the bill would be exempt from the training requirement. Also, if a person were coaching an activity for which there was more than one coach, the person would not have to be certified in sport safety training if at least one of the other coaches held valid certification. In addition, training would not be required if a coach had a physical limitation that made it impractical for him or her to complete the course and obtain the certification.

Under the bill, coaches with valid sport safety certification would not be liable in a civil suit for damages resulting from an act or omission in the course of providing physical aid on the job, except for an act or omission constituting gross negligence or willful and wanton misconduct.

Proposed MCL 380.1523

### **ARGUMENTS**

*(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)*

#### **Supporting Argument**

Coaches who are knowledgeable about sport safety are more likely to prevent, prepare for, and respond effectively to sport-related injuries. It is reasonable to expect, therefore, that every interscholastic athletic team have on staff at least one coach trained in current safety methods. The Red Cross and the U.S. Olympic Committee have co-developed a sport safety training course to address this need. The six-and-one-half-hour class is designed to educate coaches about safety techniques, raise awareness of safety issues, and provide

an atmosphere in which athletes can train and compete with the confidence that their coach has taken a sport safety course. The course includes training in first aid care and CPR. If the Red Cross were not available to provide sport safety training, a course with similar content could be approved by the State Board of Education. Reportedly, 21 other states mandate training in CPR and/or first aid for coaches.

### **Opposing Argument**

Schools have enough difficulty recruiting teachers, let alone teacher-coaches. The bill would primarily affect new hires, and could restrict the number of eligible candidates for coaching positions. Also, the requirement would be too expensive for some districts.

**Response:** The sport safety training course requires a minimal investment in time but provides a great return in peace of mind. In addition, a new coach would not be responsible for holding valid certification if others on staff were already certified. The additional certification requirement would be minor enough that new teacher-coaches would not be deterred from accepting a job with a public school or public school academy. Furthermore, if a school found that it could not afford the \$40 per coach that it reportedly costs for CPR and first aid training through the Red Cross, the school could create its own program with trained instructors.

### **Opposing Argument**

The bill should not exempt coaches of sports in which another coach already has the training. Athletic practice and events, and consequently accidents, do not always take place at a centralized location, which means that the coach with training would not necessarily be present where he or she was needed.

Legislative Analyst: C. Layman

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: J. Carrasco

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.