

My name is Stacey Stuck. I have lived in Northumberland County for most of my life. I have been the Junior Olympic Commissioner for the Amateur Softball Association of PA for the past 8 years. I currently manage all aspects of youth softball for the Commonwealth. Prior to becoming the Commissioner, I played softball from the age of 12 participating on high School Championships teams as well as women's fast-pitch and slow-pitch ASA of PA Championship teams. I was a fast-pitch pitcher as well as a slow-pitch pitcher so I have experienced the way the game has changed over the years with the addition of the non-wooden bats.

Firstly, The ASA of PA registers the 3rd largest number of teams in the Country exceeded only by Southern California and Texas. We register almost 5,000 teams here. We also register players and coaches individually for insurance purposes.

I personally manage this program and must sign all of the insurance claims before being submitted for payment to the Insurance Company. In the past year, we have registered over 17,000 players and coaches. I have signed less than 12 claims at this time. The majority of injuries have been from sliding, collisions, or throwing accidents. I do not recall any claim due to a child being hit by a batted ball in the 2007 season.

In addition, over the years, I have been in charge of numerous tournaments for youth softball. In all of these tournaments, the most serious accident that I can remember is a shortstop getting her lower leg broken in several places due to a collision with a sliding base runner. I do not remember any batted ball incidents.

We, the ASA of PA, have also developed a program by which we have classifications for the youth program. There are 3 classifications which include 18-Gold for our best 18 year old teams, Class A for our travel ball programs, and Class B for our recreational programs so the skill levels of the players are more evenly matched.

Secondly, the Amateur Softball Association has taken great strides to protect the integrity of the sport. Each year, the ASA's equipment testing and specifications committee examines the current rules and specifications governing various items of equipment. This committee makes recommendations to the ASA's council comprised of ASA commissioners, select youth and player representatives, umpire-in-chiefs, elite athletes and other affiliated members. The council is the ultimate decision maker of ASA rules and regulations regarding equipment. At this time, there are 64 bats on the banned bat list.

Thirdly, I feel that the recruitment process for our high school age young women would suffer tremendously. While the rest of the country is playing softball using the most advanced equipment available, it seems College coaches will search elsewhere to find young women to recruit for their teams and scholarships. This legislation will force our children to function at a disadvantage in the highly competitive world of scholarships and athletic competition. We have fought hard to improve our position within this competition. The ASA is the organization of preference for college coaches and the ASA of PA sanctions at least 3 college showcases each year.

I also researched the aspect of the ball coming off a wooden bat versus a non-wooden bat. What I found is there is less than 5% difference in the speed which is incrementally small in relationship to the game. If PA would adopt the use of wooden bats only, I see some other inherent issues that would affect the game. The best

wooden quality would be used in the Major Leagues with the quality of wood degrading down to the youth level. Therefore, the bats would break and splinter, creating a different hazard for the sport. We all have seen wooden bats break and pieces fly through the air at some time or another. Also, the durability of the bat comes into question. How many bats would a team need to buy for a season when a non-wooden bat may last for many seasons?

Adopting this legislation would also be detrimental to the economy in PA where we host many tournaments attended by teams from around and outside the Commonwealth. If this legislation was adopted, these teams would no longer come to PA to play in these tournaments and therefore hotels, restaurants, etc would suffer since teams participating from outside the Commonwealth would have to abide by this regulation.

One other issue that I foresee is that we potentially have 18 and 19 year old young women who play in both high school and summer softball programs. Therefore, they would be able to legally use a non-wooden bat when everyone else could not and the fielders would still need to field the batted ball, rendering the legislation virtually useless.

In closing, I see enforcement of this legislation problematic at best but I will not speculate on that issue. If this assembly would like to improve softball and baseball for our youth, then perhaps legislation which would require background checks for coaches who directly impact the welfare of our children might serve our children better. Another issue that would well serve our children may be to require coaches to attend coaching education classes so the children are taught the proper techniques to hit, field, and play this sport thereby rendering a level of safety.

I am respectfully requesting this assembly to defeat House Bill Number 1482 and allow the governing body of the sport continue to preserve our sport.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



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