

P.L.2017, Joint Resolution No. 16, *approved July 21, 2017*
Assembly Joint Resolution No. 115

- 1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating the third Friday in September of
2 every year as Concussion Awareness Day.
3
- 4 **WHEREAS**, A concussion is a traumatic brain injury that disrupts the
5 normal functioning of the brain and can cause significant and
6 sustained neuropsychological impairment affecting problem
7 solving, planning, memory, attention, concentration, and behavior;
8 and
- 9 **WHEREAS**, The symptoms of a concussion can last for days, weeks, or
10 months, and may include prolonged headache, vision disturbance,
11 dizziness, nausea or vomiting, impaired balance, confusion,
12 memory loss, ringing in the ears, difficulty concentrating,
13 sensitivity to light, and loss of smell or taste; and
- 14 **WHEREAS**, Young children and teenagers are more likely to get a
15 concussion, and generally have a longer recovery time, than adults;
16 and
- 17 **WHEREAS**, The most recent concussion-specific data from the federal
18 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates that 300,000
19 concussions are sustained nationwide during sports related
20 activities, and that more than 62,000 concussions are sustained each
21 year in high school contact sports; and
- 22 **WHEREAS**, According to the University of Pittsburgh's Brain Trauma
23 Research Center, the likelihood of suffering a concussion while
24 playing a contact sport is as high as 19 percent per season of play;
25 and
- 26 **WHEREAS**, It has been estimated that 34 percent of college football
27 players have experienced at least one concussion, and 20 percent of
28 college football players have endured multiple concussions, while a
29 study conducted by McGill University indicated that 60 percent of
30 college soccer players had reported concussion symptoms at least
31 once during a single season of play; and
- 32 **WHEREAS**, A 2013 report on pediatric sports injuries, which was
33 released by the non-profit advocacy group Safe Kids Worldwide,
34 found that in 2012, 12 percent of all pediatric sports-related
35 emergency room visits (or 163,670 visits in total), involved a
36 concussion, and nearly half of those visits (47 percent) involved
37 concussions in children aged 12 to 15; and
- 38 **WHEREAS**, The Safe Kids Worldwide report likely underestimates the
39 number and percentage of pediatric concussion cases, since it
40 focuses on emergency room visits only, and does not account for
41 the four out of five childhood concussion sufferers (82 percent of
42 childhood concussion sufferers) who seek care at their primary care

1 physician, at an urgent care center, or at a sports medicine clinic,
2 rather than in a hospital emergency room; and

3 **WHEREAS**, It is important to properly identify and address a
4 concussion when it occurs, and allow the brain to have adequate
5 time to heal from the trauma, since the failure to do so may leave
6 the victim vulnerable to repeat concussions and a resulting
7 condition known as “second impact syndrome,” which can lead to
8 severe mental impairment, brain swelling, permanent brain damage,
9 and even death; and

10 **WHEREAS**, Despite the danger associated with concussions and second
11 impact syndrome, the symptoms of a concussion are often ignored,
12 particularly in the sporting activities where they are most common;
13 and

14 **WHEREAS**, As many as seven in 10 young athletes report that they
15 have continued to play sports even with concussion symptoms, and
16 out of those, four in 10 reported that their coaches were unaware
17 that they had a possible concussion; and

18 **WHEREAS**, Through the passage of P.L.2010, c.94 (C.18A:40-41.1 et
19 seq.), New Jersey has already required schools, school districts,
20 coaches, athletic trainers, school nurses, and school physicians to
21 take certain specified actions to minimize the risk of concussion
22 and better protect students who suffer a concussion while engaged
23 in interscholastic sporting activities; and

24 **WHEREAS**, Medical knowledge surrounding concussions is
25 continuously evolving, and it is important for parents, coaches,
26 athletic trainers, and others to keep abreast of new information in
27 this area, so that concussion response and care can continuously be
28 improved; now, therefore,

29
30 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
31 *State of New Jersey:*

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33 1. The third Friday in September of each year is designated as
34 “Concussion Awareness Day” to raise awareness of the causes,
35 dangerous effects, and signs and symptoms of concussion and
36 second impact syndrome, particularly in young persons; to improve
37 public understanding in regard to evolving concussion response
38 standards and treatment methods; and to highlight the need for
39 vigilance in recognizing and appropriately responding to the
40 symptoms of a concussion, in order to prevent further serious
41 injury.

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43 2. The Governor is respectfully requested to issue a
44 proclamation recognizing “Concussion Awareness Day” in New
45 Jersey, and calling upon public officials and the citizens of this
46 State to observe the day with appropriate activities and programs.

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48 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

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3 This joint resolution would designate the third Friday in
4 September of every year as “Concussion Awareness Day” in New
5 Jersey.

6 A concussion is a traumatic brain injury that disrupts the normal
7 functioning of the brain and can cause significant and sustained
8 neuropsychological impairment affecting problem solving,
9 planning, memory, attention, concentration, and behavior. The
10 symptoms of a concussion can last for days, weeks, or months, and
11 may include prolonged headache, vision disturbance, dizziness,
12 nausea or vomiting, impaired balance, confusion, memory loss,
13 ringing in the ears, difficulty concentrating, sensitivity to light, and
14 loss of smell or taste. Young children and teenagers, moreover, are
15 more likely to get a concussion, and generally have a longer
16 recovery time, than adults.

17 According to the University of Pittsburgh’s Brain Trauma
18 Research Center, the likelihood of suffering a concussion while
19 playing a contact sport is as high as 19 percent per season of play,
20 and it has been estimated that 34 percent of college football players
21 have experienced at least one concussion, that 20 percent of college
22 football players have endured multiple concussions, and that 60
23 percent of college soccer players experience concussion symptoms
24 at least once during a single season of play. A 2013 report on
25 pediatric sports injuries, which was released by the non-profit
26 advocacy group Safe Kids Worldwide, found that 12 percent of all
27 pediatric sports-related emergency room visits (or 163,670 visits in
28 total), involved a concussion, and nearly half of those visits
29 involved concussions in children aged 12 to 15. While these
30 statistics are significant on their own, the Safe Kids Worldwide
31 report likely underestimates the total number and percentage of
32 pediatric concussion cases, since it focuses on emergency room
33 visits only, and does not account for the four out of five (or 82
34 percent) of childhood concussion sufferers who seek care at their
35 primary care physician, at an urgent care center, or at a sports
36 medicine clinic, rather than in a hospital emergency room.

37 The failure to properly identify and address concussion
38 symptoms when they arise may leave the victim vulnerable to
39 repeat concussions and a resulting condition known as “second
40 impact syndrome,” which can lead to severe mental impairment,
41 brain swelling, permanent brain damage, and even death. Despite
42 the danger associated with concussions and second impact
43 syndrome, as many as seven in 10 young athletes report that they
44 have continued to play sports even with concussion symptoms, and
45 out of those, four in 10 reported that their coaches were unaware
46 that they had a possible concussion.

47 Because there is evidence that concussion symptoms are often
48 ignored, particularly in the sporting activities where they are most

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1 common, there is a need to improve public awareness of the
2 seriousness of this condition, and better enable members of the
3 public to recognize the symptoms of a concussion. In addition,
4 medical knowledge surrounding concussions is continuously
5 evolving, and it is important for parents, coaches, athletic trainers,
6 and others to keep abreast of new information in this area, so that
7 concussion response and care can continually be improved.

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13 Designates third Friday in September of every year as
Concussion Awareness Day.