ASSEMBLY, No. 670

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE
District 37 (Bergen)

SYNOPSIS

Prohibits children under age 12 from participating in tackle football.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.

AN ACT concerning youth athletics and supplementing Title 5 of the Revised Statutes and P.L.2010, c.94 (C.18A:40-41.1 et seq.).

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. a. As used in this section:

"Tackle football" means any practice or game of American football where physical contact is used to force opposing players to the ground.

"Youth sports team organization" means one or more sports teams organized pursuant to a nonprofit or similar charter or which are member teams in a league organized by or affiliated with a county or municipal recreation department.

b. A child under the age of 12 shall not be permitted to participate in tackle football offered by a youth sports team organization. A child under the age of 12 shall be eligible to participate in all other athletic activities offered by a youth sports team organization including, but not limited to, touch football or flag football.

2. a. As used in this section, "tackle football" means any practice or game of American football where physical contact is used to force opposing players to the ground.

b. A school district shall not permit a student under the age of 12 to participate in tackle football during interscholastic athletics, intramural athletics, a physical education program, or any other athletic activity offered to students.

3. Section 1 of this act shall take effect six months following the date of enactment and section 2 shall take effect in the first full school year following the date of enactment.

STATEMENT

This bill prohibits children under the age of 12 from participating in organized tackle football programs. Under the bill, children under the age of 12 will not be permitted to participate in tackle football offered by a youth sports team organization. Those children are eligible to participate in all other athletic activities offered by the youth sports team organization including, but not limited to, touch football or flag football.

The bill also provides that a school district may not permit a student under the age of 12 to participate in tackle football during interscholastic athletics, intramural athletics, a physical education program, or any athletic activity offered to students.

Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) is caused by repetitive hits to the head sustained over a period of years. Athletes who begin playing contact sports at younger ages are at a greater risk for neurological impairment later in life, including CTE. Studies show that exposure to tackle football before the age of 12 is associated with a greater risk of neurological impairment than exposure to tackle football starting at or after the age of 12.