

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PENINSULA POP WARNER RESPONSE TO LEGISLATIVE BAN OF YOUTH TACKLE FOOTBALL

February 23, 2018

San Francisco, CA – On February 9, 2018, two California legislators, Kevin McCarty (D-Sacramento), and Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher (D-San Diego) announced a bill called the Safe Youth Football Act that proposes the lawful ban of youth tackle football statewide.

While this announcement may be well intentioned, it is definitely misguided. Peninsula Pop Warner (PPW) is committed to playing the sport of youth tackle football because: (1) our parents deserve the freedom of choice regarding which sports are best for their children, (2) the sport has never been safer, and (3) the medical research is inconclusive.

Parents, not the state of California, are the most qualified to make decisions regarding which sports their child chooses to play. You have that right today, and future generations should have that right as well. Scott Hallenback, CEO of USA Football stated on February 8, 2018, "USA Football believes parents – not government officials – are best suited to discern which sports their children play", and we agree.

PPW is committed to continue improving the safety of youth tackle football. Through the actions of our Associations, our participation in the USA Football training and standards, and operation under the Pop Warner National Rules, we implemented new practice formats, rule changes, tackling and blocking techniques, and coach certifications to make our sport safer. In 2017, we partnered with HitCheck and purchased a baseline concussion test for every football and cheer participant in our League. We are making progress, and more needs to be done.

In a press release dated February 9, 2018, Michael Wagner, Executive Commissioner SCC Pop Warner stated that "Quite simply, youth football is dramatically different today than the era most researchers are studying". The truth is that you can find research that will support just about any opinion that you want to take with respect to concussions, head safety, and CTE.

PPW supports the continued evolution of tackle football and welcomes all sincere intentions from others to join us to this end. We ask our associations, parents, alumni, and communities that we serve to contact their local legislators to voice your opinion on this proposed bill. You can find them here: <http://findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov/>.