

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1011

March 28, 2026

Andrew D. Racine, MD, Ph.D., FAAP
President
American Academy of Pediatrics
345 Park Boulevard,
Itasca, IL 60143

Dear Dr. Racine,

I write to elevate an issue brought to me by a young athlete from Georgia, who shared concerns about the long-term impacts of both traumatic and non-traumatic brain injuries. As the nation's leading organization representing pediatricians and dedicated to the health and well-being of children, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has a critical role to play in protecting children and student athletes and in guiding evidence-based care for young people affected by brain injury. I write to inquire into your ongoing efforts and to better understand what more can be done to strengthen protections and care for children and student athletes.

Children and adolescents account for a significant share of traumatic brain injuries, particularly those related to sports and recreation. Nationally, children ages 17 and under account for approximately 70 percent of sports- and recreation-related traumatic brain injury and concussion-related emergency department visits.¹ Between 2010 and 2016, an average of 283,000 children sought care in emergency departments each year for sports- and recreation-related traumatic brain injuries.² In Georgia, youth ages 10 to 19 represent one of the largest groups affected by traumatic brain injury.³ These injuries can affect a child's ability to safely return to school and physical activity and require appropriate evaluation and management to support recovery. These figures reflect the continued need to strengthen prevention, improve recognition of symptoms, and ensure children and families are able to access appropriate care.

As you know, we continue to learn more about brain injury through research conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Veterans Affairs. However, as I wrote in my letter to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), ensuring that this research translates into consistent and accessible care remains a challenge and one of my highest priorities.⁴

The AAP's work to issue clinical guidance on sport-related concussion, including recommendations on diagnosis, management, and return-to-play and return-to-learn protocols, has helped establish a more consistent standard of care for children and student athletes.⁵ The AAP's efforts to provide resources for pediatricians, schools, and families and to advance

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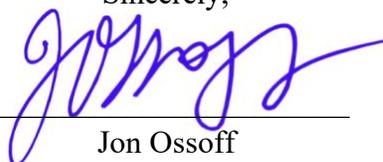
policies that prioritize child health and safety have also strengthened the recognition and management of brain injuries in youth.⁶ Therefore, to the extent possible, I urge you to continue your efforts to expand awareness, strengthen access to care, and support children and student athletes affected by brain injury. For this reason, I ask that the AAP provide information regarding the challenges that remain and the steps needed to better address brain injury in children and student athletes:

1. What gaps remain in the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and long-term management of traumatic and non-traumatic brain injuries in children and adolescents?
2. What barriers do pediatricians, families, schools, and coaches continue to face in recognizing brain injuries and ensuring children receive critical care and support?
3. What Federal initiatives, policy changes, or funding streams does the AAP believe are most needed to improve outcomes for children and student athletes affected by brain injury?
4. What ongoing efforts is the AAP undertaking to support or advance research on pediatric brain injury, including efforts to improve long-term outcomes for children and adolescents?

I trust organizations like the AAP, in coordination with physicians, families, schools, coaches, and state partners, to identify practical approaches to improving outcomes for children affected by brain injury. I would welcome the opportunity to continue this dialogue and work together to support children and families in Georgia and across the country. I respectfully request that you brief my staff on the AAP's current priorities and recommendations for Congress to best support these efforts.

Thank you for your consideration and continued leadership to support children and families affected by brain injury.

Sincerely,



Jon Ossoff
United States Senator

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¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. HEADS UP: Data on Sports and Recreation Activities, <https://www.cdc.gov/heads-up/data/index.html> (last updated January 27, 2026).

² Ibid.

³ Georgia Department of Public Health. Traumatic Brain Injury (CDC CORE Program), <https://dph.georgia.gov/health-topics/injury-prevention-program/cdc-core/traumatic-brain-injury> (last updated June 5, 2025).

⁴ Letter from Senator Jon Ossoff to the National Collegiate Athletic Association, https://www.ossoff.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/26.03.27_Sen.-Ossoff-Letter-to-NCAA.pdf (sent March 27, 2026).

⁵ Halstead ME, Walter KD, Moffatt K. Sport-Related Concussion in Children and Adolescents (2018). *Pediatrics*, 142(6), e20183074. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2018-3074>

⁶ American Academy of Pediatrics. Concussion Care and Resources for Pediatricians, <https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/concussion/> (last updated June 10, 2021).