

YMCA YOUTH LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

_____ Bill Number _____

Legislative Action:

Introduced by: Molly Downey
Authored by: Molly Downey

House Committee: _____
House: _____
Senate Committee: _____
Senate: _____
Governor: _____

Delegation: Bozeman High School

Referred to Committee: _____

1 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT TO MANDATE THAT HIGH SCHOOL
2 ATHLETES MAINTAIN A 'C' GRADE OR BETTER IN EVERY COURSE TAKEN
3 DURING THE CURRENT AND PRECEDING HIGH SCHOOL SEMESTERS"

4
5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE MONTANA YMCA YOUTH LEGISLATURE:
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7 **Section 1. Background:** The Montana High School Association (MHSA) handbook
8 currently states, "A student must be enrolled and in regular attendance twenty hours per week at
9 the school where the student participates" and "A student must have received a passing grade
10 and received credit in at least twenty periods of prepared class work or its equivalent in the last
11 previous semester, at the school where the student participates." It defines twenty periods as
12 "four subjects that grant one unit of credit each for the full school year, or their equivalent."
13 Thus, as long as a student passes four one credit classes (or their equivalent) they may participate
14 in a high school sport.

15 **Section 2. Action:** This bill is intended to ensure that, for all student athletes, school
16 comes first. In some schools in Montana, students who received a failing grade in one or more
17 courses are still allowed to participate in sports. This should no longer be allowed. It is the
18 primary goal of our education system to educate. Sports and extracurricular activities are
19 privileges. Raising the requirements would provide incentive for athletes to apply themselves in
20 school. The ability to participate in sports will act as a reward for students who also achieve
21 satisfactory grades. Thus, this bill will require that all student athletes receive a 'C' (average)
22 grade in all classes in both the semester they choose to participate in the sport and the preceding
23 semester. Also, any students who have been suspended during that school year will not be
24 allowed to participate in high school athletics.

25 Transfer students will be subject to all other MHSA rules and regulations, and the above
26 change of grade requirements will apply to them as well. For transfer students, the previous and
27 current semester of sport participation will still be considered. A transcript from the previous
28 school will be necessary. (For all purposes, a C grade equals 70%-79.4%) If the student
29 transfers in the middle of a semester, the grades from the first part of the semester at the different
30 school will be used to determine eligibility during that semester.

31 In the case of a fluke low grade, students who do not meet the above qualifications but
32 who have an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher may petition with the MHSA to participate in the sport
33 season.

34 Students whose grade may drop below a 'C' during the season will not be allowed to play
35 on the team during that season. However, if they raise their grade during that semester, they may
36 return to the team as soon as they do so.

37 A warning system will be set in place. As soon as the student's grade drops to a 75%
38 they will be notified that they are in the middle C range. If it reaches a 70% they will receive
39 another warning.

40 **Section 3. Enforcement:** The MHSA will change their handbook and thus will act as
41 the enforcer. The student's coach (or school) will be required to check the student's records at
42 the start of the sport's season and biweekly throughout the season to ensure the student is
43 maintaining the proper grades. If the school does not comply, it will be penalized by the MHSA
44 by means already established.

45 **Section 4. Funding:** This bill does not require additional funding.

46 **Section 5. Effective date:** This bill will go into effect at the start of the 2009-2010
47 school year.

48 **-end-**