
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anna Caballero, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 708 (Valencia) - California Youth Football Act: safety equipment

Version: March 27, 2025
Urgency: No
Hearing Date: June 15, 2026

Policy Vote: HEALTH 9 - 0, JUD. 12 - 0
Mandate: No
Consultant: Agnes Lee

Bill Summary: AB 708 would require a youth tackle football league, youth sports organization that conducts a tackle football program, or coach of a youth sports organization to allow youth tackle football participants to use safety equipment, as specified.

Fiscal Impact: Unknown, potential workload costs to the courts related to plaintiffs seeking remedies under the bill (Trial Court Trust Fund, General Fund). While the courts are not funded on a workload basis, an increase in workload could result in delayed court services and would put pressure on the General Fund to increase the amount appropriated for trial court operations.

Background: Under the California Youth Football Act, a youth sports organization that conducts a tackle football program must comply with all of the following requirements:

- A tackle football team cannot conduct more than two full-contact practices per week during the preseason and regular season.
- A tackle football team cannot hold a full-contact practice during the off-season.
- The full-contact portion of a practice cannot exceed 30 minutes in any single day.
- A coach must annually receive a tackling and blocking certification from a nationally recognized program that emphasizes shoulder tackling, safe contact and blocking drills, and techniques designed to minimize the risk during contact by removing the involvement of youth tackle football participant's head from all tackling and blocking techniques.
- Each youth tackle football administrator, coach, and referee must annually complete specified education and training.
- Each parent or guardian of a youth tackle football participant must receive concussion and head injury information, as specified.
- Each football helmet must be reconditioned and recertified every other year, unless stated otherwise by the manufacturer.
- A minimum of one certified emergency medical technician, state-licensed paramedic, or higher-level licensed medical professional must be present during all preseason, regular season, and postseason games.

- A coach must annually receive first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and automated external defibrillator certification.
- At least one independent nonrostered individual, appointed by the youth sports organization, must be present at all practice locations. The individual must hold current and active certification in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, automated external defibrillator, and concussion protocols. The individual must have the authority to evaluate and remove any youth tackle football participant from practice who exhibits an injury, including, but not limited to, symptoms of a concussion or other head injury.
- Safety equipment must be inspected before every full-contact practice or game to ensure that all youth tackle football participants are properly equipped.
- Removal of a youth tackle football participant for injury must comply with specified protocols.
- Each youth tackle football participant must complete a minimum of 10 hours of noncontact practice at the beginning of each season for the purpose of conditioning, acclimating to safety equipment, and progressing to the introduction of full-contact practice. During this noncontact practice, the youth tackle football participants cannot wear any pads, and must only wear helmets if required to do so by the coaches.
- A youth sports organization must annually provide a declaration to its youth tackle football league stating that it is in compliance with these provisions.

Proposed Law: Specific provisions of the bill would:

- Require a youth tackle football league, youth sports organization that conducts a tackle football program, or coach of a youth sports organization to allow youth tackle football participants to use safety equipment, including soft-shelled add-ons on football helmets.
- Provide that a court may grant a temporary restraining order, preliminary injunction, or permanent injunction to remedy a violation or threatened violation of this provision; and provide that a prevailing plaintiff who obtains a remedy must be entitled to an award of reasonable attorney's fees and costs.

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