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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

May 27, 2021

Honorable Kate Brown
Office of the Governor
900 Court Street, NE
Suite 254
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Governor Brown,

In a letter to you dated May 13, 2021, I expressed my concern regarding the continued mandate for student-athletes to wear masks while participating in sports. Since that time, OSAA has relaxed the mandate for wrestlers to wear masks but not for basketball players. At this point, basketball is the *only* sport remaining for high school students.

On May 26, 2021, the Crook County School District sent a letter to Mr. Colt Gill, Director of the Oregon Department of Education, and to Mr. Peter Weber, Executive Director of the Oregon Schools Activities Association, expressing concern regarding a lack of consistent policy with respect to the mask mandate and student-athletes. Since that time, Crook County School Superintendent, Ms. Sara Johnson, had a phone conversation with Mr. Gill and Mr. Weber in response to that letter. Mr. Gill and Mr. Weber relayed to Ms. Johnson their views that the mask mandate for high school basketball should be revisited. Mr. Gill and Mr. Weber further indicated that the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) has not supported relaxing this mandate and the only person with the ability/authority to change this mandate is the State Health Officer and Epidemiologist, Dr. Seidlinger. However, he is unavailable for the next week or more.

Governor, this is unacceptable. Basketball is underway now, and kids around the state are at risk from complications due to a lack of oxygen from wearing masks in cardiovascular intense sports (*see my letter dated May 13, 2021*). How can the OHA justify that wrestling without a mask poses less of a COVID-19 transmission risk than playing basketball? OHA must understand that students running for extended periods while masked-up can have serious negative consequences considering the agency has previously, and appropriately, altered this rule for outdoor sports (track).

OHA's decision, or lack thereof, leaves our communities and our young athletes with no clear answers. Members of the public are asking our athletic directors, coaches, principals, and district personnel these questions. This decision cannot be altered by local district personnel and OHA seems unwilling or unable to engage on the issue.

Governor, you have the ability and obligation to make this change. Take action now before another week goes by and another student is put at risk.

Respectfully,



Vikki Breese Iverson
State Representative
House District 55