SYNOPSIS

Establishes task force to examine issues and make recommendations concerning youth sports, including abusive coaching, confrontational parents, and bullying of players.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.
AN ACT establishing a Youth Sports Task Force to examine various issues associated with youth sports.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. a. There is established a Youth Sports Task Force for the purpose of examining, evaluating, and making recommendations regarding youth sports.
   b. The task force shall consist of 13 members as follows:
      (1) six members who each have a background in, or special knowledge of, the legal, policy, educational, social, or psychological aspects of bullying. These six members shall be appointed as follows: two appointed by the Senate President; two appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly; and two appointed by the Governor;
      (2) four members of the public, to be appointed by the Governor, including: the parent or guardian of a student-athlete who participates in an interscholastic sports program; the parent or guardian of an athlete who participates in youth sports events as defined in section 1 of P.L.2002, c.74 (C.5:17-1); the parent or guardian of an athlete who participates in youth sports activities sponsored by a for-profit entity; and a youth who was a victim of harassment, intimidation, or bullying while participating in youth sports; and
      (3) three coaches to be appointed by the Governor, including a coach of an interscholastic sports program, a coach of youth sports events, and a coach of youth sports activities sponsored by a for-profit entity.
   c. Appointments to the task force shall be made within 30 days of the effective date of this act. Vacancies in the membership of the task force shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments were made.
   d. Members of the task force shall serve without compensation, but shall be reimbursed for necessary expenditures incurred in the performance of their duties as members of the task force within the limits of funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the task force for its purposes.

2. a. The task force shall organize as soon as practicable, but no later than 30 days following the appointment of its members. The task force shall choose a chairperson from among its members and shall appoint a secretary who need not be a member of the task force.
   b. The Department of Education shall provide such stenographic, clerical, and other administrative assistants, and such professional staff as the task force requires to carry out its work. The task force also shall be entitled to call to its assistance and avail
itself of the services of the employees of any State, county, or
municipal department, board, bureau, commission, or agency as it
may require and as may be available for its purposes.

3. a. It shall be the duty of the task force to study and consider
issues in regard to youth sports including, but not limited to, the
following:
(1) protection for parents, guardians, and athletes from
unscrupulous business practices conducted by for-profit entities
sponsoring youth sports activities;
(2) financial oversight to strengthen the business practices of
youth sports team organizations, as defined in section 5 of
P.L.2010, c.94 (C.18A:40-41.5), and for-profit entities that sponsor
youth sports;
(3) training for coaches to recognize the signs and symptoms of
harassment, intimidation, and bullying;
(4) ways to acknowledge and promote youth sports as an
extension of the classroom;
(5) developing training workshops for parents and guardians to
recognize the signs and symptoms of harassment, intimidation,
bullying, and abusive coaching, and on proper spectator conduct;
and
(6) protection for sports officials from abusive behavior while
engaged in the performance of their duties.

b. The task force shall hold at least one public hearing during
the course of its work in order to receive public input on the issues
being studied by the task force.

4. The task force shall issue a final report of its findings and
recommendations to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant
to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), no later than one
year after the task force organizes.

5. This act shall take effect immediately, and the task force
shall expire 30 days after the issuance of its report.

STATEMENT

This bill establishes the Youth Sports Task Force. Under the bill,
the task force will consist of 13 members including six members
who each have a background in, or special knowledge of, the legal,
policy, educational, social, or psychological aspects of bullying. Of
these six members, two will be appointed by the Senate President,
two will be appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, and
two will be appointed by the Governor. The task force will also
consist of seven members of the public to be appointed by the
Governor, including the parents or guardians of athletes
participating on youth sports teams and a youth who was a victim of
harassment, intimidation, or bullying while participating on a youth
sports team.

The task force will study and consider issues of youth sports
including, but not limited to:

- protection for parents, guardians, and athletes from
  unscrupulous business practices conducted by for-profit
  entities sponsoring youth sports activities;
- financial oversight to strengthen the business practices of
  youth sports team organizations and for-profit entities
  sponsoring youth sports activities;
- training for coaches to recognize the signs and symptoms of
  harassment, intimidation, and bullying;
- ways to acknowledge and promote youth sports as an
  extension of the classroom;
- developing training workshops for parents and guardians to
  recognize the signs and symptoms of harassment, 
  intimidation, bullying, and abusive coaching, and on proper
  spectator conduct; and
- protection for sports officials from abusive behavior while
  engaged in the performance of their duties.

The bill directs the task force to issue a final report of its
findings and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature
no later than one year after its organizational meeting. The task
force will expire 30 days after the submission of its final report.