



## The Massachusetts Chapter

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June 21, 2013

To the Honorable Chairs and Members  
Joint Committee on Education:

### **Re: H. 445, "An Act Relative to Recognizing Cheerleading as a Sport"**

This testimony is submitted on behalf of the Massachusetts Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (MCAAP) which represents approximately 1,800 pediatricians across the Commonwealth. Our members provide health care for most of the children in Massachusetts, and we have active committees and groups who address a wide variety of health challenges to children and families, and provide academic and policy advice to leaders here and across the country.

The MCAAP supports House Bill 445, "An Act Relative to Recognizing Cheerleading as a Sport." We recognize that the increased complexity of cheerleading, as well as the growing popularity of competitive cheerleading teams, has steadily increased the injuries associated with this activity.

It is alarming that cheerleading now accounts for fully two-thirds of all catastrophic events amongst female high school athletes. We believe that this statistic alone is sufficient to warrant sport designation so that cheerleading participants may be afforded the same level of safety as other athletes. As supportive evidence, we are attaching to this testimony a 2012 Policy Statement from the American Academy of Pediatrics that reviews the subject and makes sports designation its primary recommendation.

The MCAAP would urge the Committee to give H. 445 a favorable report, and we would welcome the opportunity to work with the Committee as you consider the bill.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John O'Reilly".

John O'Reilly  
President, The Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics