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### **Athletic Concussion Protection Act of 2011 Moves Forward With Thomas Support**

*Washington, DC*—Ward 5 Councilmember Harry "Tommy" Thomas, Jr., a co-introducer of B19-7, the "Athletic Concussion Protection Act of 2011," is pleased that the legislation is moving forward. The Council's Committee on Health, under the leadership of At-Large Councilmember David Catania, held a hearing on the bill today.

B19-7 requires the removal from play of athletes age 18 or younger suffering signs of concussion during a practice or game. Athletes with head injuries must receive written clearance from a licensed health care provider before they can return to practice or play. The bill also calls for the Department of Health to develop and implement an education program to promote awareness of the symptoms of concussions among coaches, school personnel, student athletes, and the parents or guardians of student athletes.

"Far too often, young athletes suffer concussions that have long lasting effects, which is why we need to put protective measures in place" said Councilmember Thomas. Recent studies estimate that 400,000 concussions occur annually among student athletes, and that more than 80 percent of student athletes with concussions has a worsening of symptoms during the first four weeks after returning to school academics. ESPN and HBO Sports have each reported on effects of concussions among student athletes.

The District is on the vanguard of introducing regulations to address concussions among student athletes. To date, only Texas, Oregon, and Washington state have laws on the books tackling this issue. "As a former student athlete, I have had my share of bumps to the head during play," said Councilmember Thomas. "I am proud that the District is on the forefront of developing policies related to student athletes and concussions."

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