

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

February 21, 2013

Bob Gardner
Executive Director
National Federation of State High School Associations
PO Box 690
Indianapolis, IN 46206

Dear President Gardner:

We write to inquire about actions the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) is taking or contemplating to educate student-athletes and school athletic departments about the potential health risks posed by energy drinks for young people and to limit the presence of energy drinks at high school athletics events.

Energy drinks with names like Monster Energy, Red Bull, Rockstar, Full Throttle, and AMP frequently target young people with claims to increase energy, attention, stamina, and physical performance. At some high school sporting events energy drinks are featured on scoreboards. Another example is the practice of outstanding student athletes at some high schools being awarded the “*Monster Energy Drink Player of the Game*.” As a part of this honor, photos of these athletes are taken with a pack of Monster Energy in each hand. The targeted marketing of young people appears to be working, with estimates of 30 to 50 percent of adolescents reporting consumption of energy drinks.¹

Student-athletes who consume energy drinks before, during, or after physical activity are exposed to a high dose of caffeine and other ingredients in a short window of time. Yet, according to a recent article in *Pediatrics in Review*², an official journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, many of the claims made by energy drink companies lack sufficient scientific evidence. In fact, the piece states that, “cardiovascular effects as a result of heavy caffeine use can be a significant source of morbidity in athletes,” and, “given the unknown levels of caffeine and other poorly studied additives, there is significant risk associated with energy drink consumption that may outweigh the benefits in the adolescent consumer.” Other reports have pointed out that the ingredients found in these drinks can cause dehydration, irregular heartbeat, nausea, arrhythmia, and in some cases even death.

As a national leader in interscholastic sports and activities that help student-athletes, the NFHS can educate students, schools, and athletic departments about the potential health risks

¹ Seifert, S, et al. *Pediatrics* Vol. 127 No. 3 March 2011 pp. S511-528

² Blankson, K., et al. *Pediatrics in Review* Vol. 34 No. 2 February 1, 2013 pp. 55 -62

posed to young people by consuming energy drinks. Further, the NFHS can play a meaningful role in limiting the marketing of energy drinks to student-athletes at school sponsored events. We look forward to learning about what actions the NFHS is considering to ensure student-athletes and schools are educated about the possible health risks associated with consuming energy drinks and what steps the NFHS has taken to limit the presence of marketing for these products at high school athletics events.

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation in responding to this request. Should you have any questions, please call on any one of us or have your staff contact Dr. Binta Beard in Sen. Durbin's office at 202-224-2152, Mr. Alex Chasick in Sen. Blumenthal's office at 202-224-2823, and Dr. Avenel Joseph in Rep. Markey's office at 202-225-2836.

Sincerely,


Richard J. Durbin Richard Blumenthal Edward J. Markey