RAISING TAX DOLLARS TO INCREASE BRAIN DAMAGE DOESN’T MAKE SENSE...

The Point Pleasant Beach school board is considering a December referendum on improvements to athletic facilities throughout the district. Part of the discussion is for turf football fields.

Brain damage in sports is a real thing, especially for football players. We've discovered that the brain, that big lump at the top of our spine, is more vulnerable than we ever imagined. We should be proud of our football heroes and the bravery they possess. But failing to protect their brains is just plain wrong. First of all, our players should not be hitting in practice. The NFL knows better, so why don’t we? Secondly, kids should never play both ways on a team. If you don’t have enough players, you shouldn’t be fielding a team and subjecting brains to increased impact. Thirdly, everything in the world should be done to protect our kids brains and turf fields do just the opposite. Studies have shown that turf fields increase impact to the brain.

In contact sports the brain is being jostled inside the skull at a sub-concussive level. These sub-concussive impacts do not present symptoms, and the player continues playing. He or she is not aware that these hits cause inflammation in the brain which eventually sets the stage for the development of CTE (Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy), a degenerative brain disease. No single sub-concussive blow to the head will set the stage for CTE, any more than one cigarette will cause cancer, but cumulatively the greater the number of hits, the greater the risk.

From our home here, we hear the band playing and the crowds cheering as the high school hosts their football rival under the lights. We need to warn parents, and grandparents, that our children's brains are far too precious to risk for a ball game. Ten years from now, no one will remember the games our little warriors sacrificed their brain for. But in ten years they may be experiencing the CTE symptoms of addiction issues, anger issues, behavioral problems, paranoia, irrationality, sleep problems, ADHD, PTSD, and the list goes on. Will the school board be there to pick up the pieces then? Schools are obligated to do no harm and enrich children’s brains, not destroy them. There are plenty of wonderful sports and activities that children can do, which will bring fresh air and exercise, build character, and do not ruin their brain. But if you insist on football for some cultural traditional and ignore science, then at least TRY to make it safer.

To learn more about CTE please visit [StopCTE.org](http://stopcte.org/)

You could save a life and a family and a community.

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