



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: 8.10.20
CONTACT: CLEO FIELDS
PHONE: 225.342.9514

STATE SENATOR FIELDS CONTINUES WORK TO PROTECT LOUISIANA'S STUDENT ATHLETES

FIELDS CALLS ON LHSAA LEADERSHIP TO PUT STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY FIRST

State Senator Cleo Fields is urging the Louisiana High School Athletic Association (LHSAA) to adhere to their previously announced guidelines for the re-opening of fall student athletics.

LHSAA Executive Director, Eddie Bonine, testified before the House Committee on Education on July 13, 2020, that high school football practice would not be allowed while the state was in Phase 2 of the governor's reopening plan. He also distributed the attached charts illustrating the association's plan. However, less than one month later, in a memo sent to member schools, LHSAA changed their policy. The attached LHSAA memo states that football practice will now be allowed for athletes wearing helmets and pads and could begin as early as August 3, 2020.

"LHSAA guidelines regarding fall football are irresponsible and are not in the best interest of our student athletes and their families," said Fields. "The reversal of their stated policy, while the state is still in Phase 2, is irresponsible and endangers the health and safety of our student athletes. In many parts of the state, students are still not in actual classrooms and are receiving virtual instruction, yet football practice is underway."

Fields says that, as evidenced by recent events and decisions regarding college football, there is simply no safe way to practice and play football while the state remains in Phase 2, especially as the COVID-19 case numbers continue to rise.

"From all available science and data, I see no justification for the LHSAA's decision to allow football practice at this time," stated Fields. "This underscores the reason why a private, nongovernmental entity with no public oversight should not serve as the final arbiter when making decisions regarding the health and safety of our children. These decisions should be made by local school boards in consultation with their medical experts."

Note to media: Please see attached chart and memo.

###