

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 17, 2025

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2025–26 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 749

Introduced by Assembly Member McKinnor

February 18, 2025

An act to add and repeal Article 2.8 (commencing with Section 124250) of Chapter 4 of Part 2 of Division 106 of the Health and Safety Code, relating to state government.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

AB 749, as amended, McKinnor. State government: California Department of Youth Sports. *Sports: study.*

Existing law authorizes public and private secondary schools to participate in interscholastic sports, and authorizes schools to enter into associations or consortia to enact and enforce rules relating to eligibility for, and participation in, these activities. Existing law recognizes the California Interscholastic Federation to be a voluntary organization that consists of school and school-related personnel with responsibility for administering interscholastic athletic activities in secondary schools.

~~This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to enact subsequent legislation relating to a study to evaluate the creation of a California Department of Youth Sports.~~ *require the Secretary of California Health and Human Services, in consultation with the State Department of Education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and other relevant agencies or departments as determined by the Secretary, to, on or before March 1, 2026, establish and convene the Blue Ribbon Commission on the Development of a California Department of Youth Sports or an Equivalent Centralized Entity to conduct a comprehensive study on the need for and feasibility of creating a centralized entity charged with*

supporting and regulating youth sports, as provided. The bill would require the commission to, on or before January 1, 2027, submit the study to the Legislature and the Governor. The bill would repeal its provisions on January 1, 2029.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: ~~no~~-yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 *SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the*
2 *following:*

3 *(a) The lack of standards and certification for coaching in youth*
4 *sports have resulted in an unregulated youth sports coaching*
5 *landscape. There is currently no state-level standardization or*
6 *required certification for coaches, leading to inconsistency in*
7 *training, safety, and quality in youth sports.*

8 *(b) The unregulated coaching landscape poses health and safety*
9 *risks. Untrained or poorly trained coaches may not be equipped*
10 *to handle the needs of diverse youth, promote positive sports*
11 *experiences, and ensure safety.*

12 *(c) The fragmented community youth sports system is currently*
13 *made up of disjointed networks with no single unified system to*
14 *coordinate or oversee community-based youth sports across*
15 *regions or organizations, creating inefficiencies and*
16 *inconsistencies in quality.*

17 *(d) This fragmented system has resulted in the duplication of*
18 *efforts. Multiple organizations work in overlapping areas, causing*
19 *confusion and misallocation of resources.*

20 *(e) The Physical Education Model Content Standards for*
21 *California Public Schools last updated in 2006, do not reflect*
22 *current physical education practices or adequately address the*
23 *broad needs of today's youth. Updated standards will support*
24 *schools and sports programs to improve their structure for*
25 *children's physical development, mental health, and overall*
26 *well-being.*

27 *(f) Updating the physical education model content standards is*
28 *especially critical when considering the diversity of student needs*
29 *due to disabilities, adverse childhood experiences, and cultural*
30 *considerations.*

1 (g) *The inadequate funding of school-based and*
2 *community-based sports fails to meet the growing demand for*
3 *quality sports and fitness opportunities, particularly when*
4 *considering the physical and mental health benefits of organized*
5 *activity.*

6 (h) *School-based physical education and after school programs*
7 *are underfunded and recess is often cut short or underfunded.*

8 (i) *The pay-to-play model for youth sports has become*
9 *increasingly exclusionary, driven by a win-at-all-cost mentality*
10 *that is creating undue stress and anxiety for participants and*
11 *encouraging overspecialization at an early age, increasing injury*
12 *risk. In addition, excessive travel, fees, and equipment costs create*
13 *financial barriers for many families, leaving millions of children*
14 *unable to participate in organized youth sports.*

15 (j) *Youth sports provide numerous benefits, including improved*
16 *physical and mental health, academic success, and social*
17 *development. They provide the opportunity to develop resilience*
18 *and teamwork as well as other social skills that help make youth*
19 *athletes life ready. Despite these benefits, participation rates vary*
20 *significantly across racial and socioeconomic lines.*

21 (k) *The 2024 Play Equity Report, commissioned by the LA84*
22 *Foundation, highlights stark disparities, with Black and Latino*
23 *youth participation in structured sports as low as 47 percent and*
24 *45 percent, respectively, compared to 59 percent for White youth.*
25 *Barriers include cost, lack of facilities, and limited programming*
26 *in underserved communities.*

27 (l) *A centralized entity, such as a California department or*
28 *commission of youth sports, can be an essential entity for creating*
29 *an integrated, equitable, and sustainable framework for youth*
30 *sports. Through coordinated efforts, updated standards, investment,*
31 *and a focus on reducing financial barriers, California can ensure*
32 *all children have the opportunity to access and engage in sports*
33 *and experience its lifelong physical, mental, and academic benefits.*

34 (m) *Models from other countries, where sports ministries*
35 *successfully coordinate national sports policies, provide valuable*
36 *examples.*

37 (n) *A centralized entity could address inequities by promoting*
38 *inclusive, accessible, and affordable youth sports programs and*
39 *coaching education.*

1 *SEC. 2. Article 2.8 (commencing with Section 124250) is added*
2 *to Chapter 4 of Part 2 of Division 106 of the Health and Safety*
3 *Code, to read:*

4
5 *Article 2.8. YOUTH SPORTS FOR ALL ACT*
6

7 *124250. This article shall be known, and may be cited, as the*
8 *Youth Sports for All Act.*

9 *124251. For purposes of this article, the following definitions*
10 *apply:*

11 (i) *“Centralized entity” means a department, commission,*
12 *board, council, or their equivalent.*

13 (b) *“Commission” means the Blue Ribbon Commission on the*
14 *Development of a California Department of Youth Sports or an*
15 *Equivalent Centralized Entity established and convened pursuant*
16 *to subdivision (a) of Section 124252.*

17 (c) *“Youth sports” has the same meaning as “youth sports*
18 *organization” as defined in Section 124235.*

19 *124252. (a) (1) The Secretary of California Health and Human*
20 *Services, in consultation with the State Department of Education,*
21 *the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and other relevant*
22 *agencies or departments as determined by the Secretary, shall, on*
23 *or before March 1, 2026, establish and convene the Blue Ribbon*
24 *Commission on the Development of a California Department of*
25 *Youth Sports or an Equivalent Centralized Entity to conduct a*
26 *comprehensive study to review the need for and feasibility of*
27 *creating a centralized entity charged with supporting and*
28 *regulating youth sports.*

29 (2) *The commission shall be composed of all of the following:*

30 (A) *10 members appointed by the California Health and Human*
31 *Services Agency, as follows:*

32 (i) *One member who represents a statewide teachers association.*

33 (ii) *One member who represents a statewide administrators*
34 *association.*

35 (iii) *One member who represents a statewide parents*
36 *association.*

37 (iv) *One member who represents youth athletes.*

38 (v) *One member from an institution of higher education with*
39 *relevant academic knowledge of youth sports, youth development,*
40 *physical education, or equivalent fields of study.*

- 1 (vi) *One member from an organization with relevant expertise*
2 *in youth mental health.*
- 3 (vii) *One member from an organization that represents publicly*
4 *funded youth sports programs.*
- 5 (viii) *One member from a community-based, sports-based youth*
6 *development program.*
- 7 (ix) *One member with relevant experience providing instruction*
8 *in physical education.*
- 9 (x) *One additional member.*
- 10 (B) *One member appointed by the State Department of*
11 *Education.*
- 12 (C) *One member appointed by the Governor's Advisory Council*
13 *on Physical Fitness and Mental Well-Being.*
- 14 (D) *One member appointed by the Governor.*
- 15 (E) *One member appointed by the Play Equity Fund.*
- 16 (F) *One member appointed by the Positive Coaching Alliance.*
- 17 (G) *One member appointed by Playworks.*
- 18 (H) *One member appointed by Center for Healing and Justice*
19 *Through Sport.*
- 20 (I) *One member appointed by the California Interscholastic*
21 *Federation.*
- 22 (J) *One member appointed by a statewide organization that*
23 *represents municipalities and local governments that operate youth*
24 *sports.*
- 25 (K) *One or more additional members appointed by the*
26 *California Health and Human Services Agency as needed to*
27 *support the work of the commission.*
- 28 (b) *The commission shall be cochaired by one of the members*
29 *appointed by the agency pursuant to subparagraph (A) of*
30 *paragraph (2) subdivision (a) and the member appointed by the*
31 *Play Equity Fund pursuant to subparagraph (E) of paragraph (2)*
32 *subdivision (a).*
- 33 124254. (a) *The commission shall conduct a study of issues*
34 *in youth sports that includes all of the following:*
- 35 (1) *An assessment of the need and potential for a centralized*
36 *entity to improve access to and involvement in sports for all youth,*
37 *regardless of race, income, or geographic location, that addresses*
38 *issues in youth sports, including, but not limited to, all of the*
39 *following:*

1 (A) Disparities in youth sports programming quality and
2 availability.

3 (B) How to foster a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment
4 for youth sports.

5 (C) How to integrate physical activity and sports into elementary
6 and secondary education through schoolday programming, after
7 school programs, and community-based organizations.

8 (D) How to implement statewide coaching certification
9 requirements to ensure quality training for all coaches in youth
10 sports.

11 (E) How to update curriculum frameworks to include youth
12 development, safety protocols, equity and inclusion, and
13 sport-specific knowledge.

14 (F) How to update the current physical education model content
15 standards and frameworks to ensure that they reflect best
16 educational practices and safety guidelines, and include diverse
17 forms of physical activity to increase equity and access to youth
18 sports and play.

19 (G) How to better integrate structured sports and team-building
20 activities into physical education curricula.

21 (H) How to create a mechanism for sustainable and adequate
22 state investment in school-based physical education programs and
23 recess and after school youth sports to improve accessibility,
24 infrastructure, and overall quality.

25 (I) How to increase state investment in the expansion of
26 accessible, free, or low-cost after school and community-based
27 youth sports programs that complement academic and recreational
28 goals.

29 (J) How to create a mechanism for state and local funding
30 initiatives that reduce or eliminate financial barriers to youth
31 sports participation.

32 (2) An evaluation of and recommendations for the duties,
33 powers, and responsibilities of a centralized entity, including, but
34 not limited to, all of the following:

35 (A) A determination of the appropriate levels of oversight of
36 relevant laws and regulations, including safety and licensing
37 requirements for coaches and staff of youth sports.

38 (B) A determination of which youth sports would benefit from
39 support and regulation from a centralized entity.

1 (C) Development and administration of statewide licensing and
2 safety requirements.

3 (D) Development and administration of statewide youth sports
4 access and quality standards.

5 (E) Development of strategies and best practices to improve
6 access and equity to competitive and noncompetitive youth sports
7 and play.

8 (F) Coordination of relevant state and federal entities to improve
9 access and equity in youth sports programs, including updating
10 physical education model content standards, frameworks, and
11 curricula.

12 (G) Identifying duplication of efforts and inefficiencies among
13 state and local entities and youth sports programs.

14 (H) Identifying data gaps and development of data collection
15 and reporting requirements.

16 (3) A review of and recommendations for both of the following:

17 (A) The costs of creating and sustaining a centralized entity.

18 (B) Potential funding sources, including state, federal, private,
19 and philanthropic sources.

20 (b) In conducting the study, the commission shall analyze models
21 of centralized entities in other states and countries that are charged
22 with supporting and regulating youth sports.

23 (c) The California Health and Human Services Agency may
24 enter into a contract with an external entity, including an institution
25 of higher education or a nonprofit organization with relevant
26 expertise, to conduct the study required by this section.

27 (d) Before finalizing the study and before submission pursuant
28 to subdivision (e), the commission shall publically present the
29 study and provide an opportunity for public feedback.

30 (e) (1) The commission shall, on or before January 1, 2027,
31 submit the study conducted pursuant to this section to the
32 Legislature and the Governor.

33 (2) A report to be submitted to the Legislature pursuant to
34 paragraph (1) shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795
35 of the Government Code.

36 124256. (a) The implementation of this article is contingent
37 upon an appropriation for its purposes in the annual Budget Act
38 or another statute.

39 (b) This article shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2029,
40 and as of that date is repealed.

1 ~~SECTION 1.—It is the intent of the Legislature to enact~~
2 ~~subsequent legislation relating to a study to evaluate the creation~~
3 ~~of a California Department of Youth Sports.~~