Dear TAA Families,

TAA would like to extend our sincere hope that you and your loved ones are staying healthy and safe during these unprecedented times. As we begin the New Year, I wanted to reach out and provide you with an update on the status of TAA spring sports and make an urgent appeal for your help.

TAA has been in discussion with Tabernacle Township, who oversees the use of our recreational parks and fields, regarding a return to play in the months ahead. As of this writing, there are four impediments preventing TAA from offering our spring programs:

- COVID case numbers remain a concern in Burlington County and Tabernacle. New, highly contagious COVID strains have been detected in NJ.
- The COVID vaccine supply does not meet the demand in NJ.
- COVID-19 liability insurance does not exist for youth serving organizations (YSOs). Unlike healthcare workers, YSOs have not been granted legal immunity from liability for COVID-19 related claims.
- COVID-19 liability exclusion legislation for youth sports leagues was introduced in August 2020, but has stalled in the state legislature.

While we all hope for widespread vaccine distribution and administration soon to help control the spread of this terrible virus, it is the last issue that is proving to be a significant ongoing challenge and where we need your help.

As we noted in the July and September emails to our TAA membership, the general liability insurance policies necessary for youth sports programs to operate now include an insurance industry standard "Epidemic and Pandemic Exclusion" that protects the insurance companies from any/all liability related to COVID-19 health claims. As a result of this exclusion, if COVID-19 transmission was alleged or confirmed to have occurred at a TAA event, the liability would fall upon TAA volunteers (coach, assistant, director, etc.) who could be held personally liable for the claim and at risk for substantial financial losses in fending off lawsuits.

While we recognize neighboring towns are planning to open registration for 2021 spring sports, the TAA board is simply not comfortable exposing our volunteers to this legal vulnerability. Again, in the state of NJ, insurance policies to protect private YSOs and their volunteers from COVID-19 related health claims simply do not exist. This is why we need your help!

Through the efforts of TAA and others, NJ Bills S-2822 and A-4565 have been introduced into the state legislature that seek to establish immunity protections for youth sports leagues for any civil damages caused by an exposure to COVID-19. Sadly, these bills have been sitting with no movement since August 2020 despite repeated requests from TAA and others.
TAA needs your support and requests that you and/or your children write to the legislative leaders in the NJ Assembly and NJ Senate as well as to Governor Murphy. We need to get the focus and attention of Senate President, Stephen Sweeney and Assembly Speaker, Craig Coughlin. Their contact information is provided below. Please write to them to share your thoughts about how important it is for all volunteer athletic organizations like TAA to provide the children of our communities with active childhoods full of fun, friends and the immeasurable benefits of participating in organized youth athletics. In your letters, please request immediate hearings on S2822 and A4565 that will grant youth sports leagues the COVID-19 immunity protections we need to reopen our recreational youth sports programs in Tabernacle and all over the state. Every voice is needed now more than ever!

Unfortunately, given the COVID-19 health risks at this time and the liability challenges facing our volunteers, it is with a heavy heart that I announce that TAA will remain dormant for the time being. With your help in petitioning for the passage of S2822 or A4565, TAA stands poised to reopen our programs and we remain hopeful that we may be able to offer a full or modified season of play in the months ahead.

Thank you in advance for your help with this letter writing campaign. We appreciate your understanding and patience as we navigate these unchartered waters together and will certainly keep you apprised of any changes or updates as we head into the spring.

Please take good care of yourself and your family.

Lynne Hedden
President, TAA

NJ State Governor Philip Murphy
https://nj.gov/governor/contact/all

NJ Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney
https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/members/bio.asp?Leg=216

NJ Assembly Speaker Craig J. Coughlin
https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/members/bio.asp?Leg=319