



SENATE BILL 116: Let Them Play and Let Us Watch.

2021-2022 General Assembly

Committee:	Senate Education/Higher Education.	If Date:	February 24, 2021
	favorable, re-refer to Rules and Operations of the Senate		
Introduced by:	Sens. Johnson, Sawyer, Britt	Prepared by:	Brian Gwyn
Analysis of:	First Edition		Committee Co-Counsel

OVERVIEW: *SB 116 would permit increased access to outdoor sporting facilities in public and nonpublic high schools.*

CURRENT LAW: Sec. 3.2.d. of Executive Order 169, issued by Gov. Cooper on Sept. 30, 2020, limits guests in spectator stands and viewing areas at a sporting facility, stadium, or sporting complex to the lesser of 100 people or 30% of the facility's stated outdoor occupancy. For spaces without a stated outdoor occupancy, no more than seven guests are permitted for every 1,000 square feet of the outdoor area's square footage. Sec. 5.2.a of Executive Order 169 applies these restrictions to educational institutions.

BILL ANALYSIS: SB 116 would require public and nonpublic high schools to set capacity limits for spectators at outdoor sporting events to no more than 40% of the facility's approved occupancy capacity under the fire code. For facilities without occupancy capacities under the fire code, no more than seven persons for every 1,000 square feet would be allowed. However, individual schools, at the discretion of their governing bodies, could choose to implement more strict access to outdoor sporting events.

Schools would still be required to comply with nonconflicting portions of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' (NCDHHS) StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit (K-12) and Interim Guidance for Administrators and Participants of Youth and Amateur Sports Programs.

For the purposes of SB 116, "spectators" would not include athletes, employees of a public or nonpublic high school, entertainers, or staff providing support for the sporting event.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The bill would be effective when it becomes law.

BACKGROUND: DHHS's [StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit \(K-12\)](#) provides guidance for families, students, and local education leaders for health practices that must be met as students return to school.

DHHS's [Interim Guidance for Administrators and Participants of Youth and Amateur Sports Programs](#) provides recommendations for conducting sports activities.

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