



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

2021-2022 General Assembly

<b>Committee:</b> Senate Rules and Operations of the Senate	<b>Date:</b> February 25, 2021
<b>Introduced by:</b> Sens. Johnson, Sawyer, Britt	<b>Prepared by:</b> Brian Gwyn
<b>Analysis of:</b> Second Edition	Staff Attorney

**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 195, issued by Gov. Cooper on February 24, 2021, limits guests in spectator stands and viewing areas at an outdoor sporting facility, stadium, or sporting complex to 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 195 applies these restrictions to educational institutions.

**BILL ANALYSIS:** SB 116 would require public and nonpublic high schools, for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year, 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 spectators for every 1,000 square feet would be allowed.

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. Additionally, if an outdoor sporting facility allows spectators to bring their own seats, individuals who sit in their own seats would not count toward the limit on the number of spectators if they maintain at least six feet of distance between themselves and anyone outside of their family unit.

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.

**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.

Jeffrey Hudson  
Director



Legislative Analysis  
Division  
919-733-2578