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ESSENTIAL POLITICS

## California politics news feed

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Feb. 8, 2018, 3:20 p.m.



CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE



By PATRICK MCGREEVY

# California would bar organized tackle football before high school under new bill



The LAPD-coached youth football team Watts Bears (in white) pursue a member of the Southern California Falcons during a 2013 game. The players are 7 to 9 years old. (Irfan Khan / Los Angeles Times)

California would become the first state to prohibit minors from playing organized tackle football before high school under a proposal made Thursday by lawmakers concerned about the health risks.

Just days after the Super Bowl, Assembly members Kevin McCarty (D-Sacramento) and Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher (D-San Diego) said they are introducing the “Safe Youth Football Act,” legislation that will be considered this year by state lawmakers.

Under the bill, organized tackle football would be allowed starting with high school freshmen.

The lawmakers said they were following advice of medical professionals who believe limiting tackle football would help prevent young athletes from sustaining long-term brain damage caused by repetitive tackling, hitting and blocking.

“The science is clear: head injuries sustained at a young age can harm kids for the rest of their lives,” Gonzalez Fletcher said in a statement. “Developing skills through flag football before high school is sound public policy from a health and safety standpoint.”

She cited studies have shown that Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy is caused by repetitive impacts to the head sustained over a period of time. She said children who play contact sports during their most critical years of brain development are at a significantly greater risk for neurological impairments and CTE later in life.

McCarty noted that noncontact youth football has produced a number of NFL legends including Jerry Rice, Walter Payton, Lawrence Taylor, Jim Brown and Tom Brady.

“The Superbowl may be over, but the risk of brain injury to kids who play tackle football remains,” he said. “The Golden State’s children need to know that no touchdown or interception is worth long-term damage to their brains caused by tackle football.”

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Feb. 8, 2018, 10:46 a.m.



CONGRESSIONAL RACES

2018 ELECTION



By CHRISTINE MAI-DUC

## New report reveals more about Rep. Duncan Hunter and the investigation into his campaign

Feedback



(David Brooks / San Diego Union-Tribune)

The FBI investigation into whether GOP Rep. Duncan Hunter of Alpine misused campaign funds for personal expenses appears to be intensifying, [according to a report by Politico](#). The website