

THE SENATE OF TEXAS

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SENATOR
EDDIE LUCIO, JR.

July 13, 2020

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Governor, State of Texas
State Capitol, 2S.1
Austin, TX 78711

Commissioner Mike Morath
Texas Education Agency
1701 North Congress Ave.
Austin, TX 78701

Dr. Charles Breithaupt
Executive Director, University Interscholastic League
P.O. Box 8028
Austin, TX 78713

Dear Governor Abbott, Commissioner Morath, and Dr. Breithaupt:

As schools prepare to reopen for instruction in the fall, they face a bewildering array of operational concerns in their attempt to begin to return to an in-person school year as much as possible. A fixture of such a normal fall semester is University Interscholastic League (UIL) competition, including weekly football games. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to worsen, as state officials being guided by the best interest of our schools, I hope we agree that restarting UIL competition in the fall poses a significant threat to the public health of the students under the state's care, along with their coaches. It is for the safety and health of our students, along with our coaching staff, that I respectfully request that Texas strategically postpone fall UIL sports until such a time that they can be performed without undue risk of accelerating the spread of COVID-19 in our public schools.

Most public health experts agree that sports with a high degree of intensity and physical contact, including football, basketball, and volleyball, are activities that carry a very high degree of risk of transmission of this deadly virus. Concerned coaches and athletic directors in my district are gravely worried for students who will necessarily come into contact with other athletes from different schools through regional competition. This concern is especially understandable in regions like the Rio Grande Valley that have seen greatly increased community spread in recent weeks, which has overtaxed our regional healthcare infrastructure with life-threatening results.

The strategic delay in fall sports I am respectfully requesting on behalf of our student athletes and their coaching staff need not mean foregoing an entire season of competition. Although the degree to which COVID-19 spreads is unpredictable, reopening cautiously in the fall while maintaining vigilant virus mitigation protocols provides



Texas a meaningful opportunity of getting the coronavirus under control in the coming months. By affording our schools meaningful time to focus on these efforts in the fall, rather than adding another series of complex decisions to their plates by restarting UIL competition, Texas would be extending them a greater opportunity of enjoying a full season for all delayed fall sports in the spring semester.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter that is vital to helping Texas overcome the coronavirus. I look forward to working with all of you on your continued efforts to keep the students of Texas safe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eddie Lucio, Jr." in a cursive style.

Eddie Lucio, Jr.
State Senator, District 27

ELJ/cwl

cc: Joe Martin, Executive Director, Texas High School Coaches Association

