



January 23, 2021

Governor Whitmer,

On behalf of the nearly 6000 members of the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan, we understand that this pandemic has been very difficult on all of us. Truth be told, our student-athletes are now at a breaking point with your decision Friday to delay the start of contact sports to February 21st. We continue to ask them to follow all safety procedures laid out from the beginning and they have. They are doing what you have asked them to do, but it's been 10 months since we've played basketball in our state. They are tired of this being pushed back over and over again. Many have expressed that they are beginning to lose faith that we don't care about their mental health or physical well being. Unlike college, they don't get this time back, and for most this is the end of their playing careers. The pandemic has delayed the season start dates for most sports, thus shortening the "window" for all to have their seasons. The clock is ticking and the calendar is working against us. We are running out of time to provide young people with important social, emotional, and educational opportunities they will never get back.

During this indefinite pause, we continue to see many of our student-athletes travel across state lines to compete in basketball when they could be playing in their own state. Not only is it wrong that our young people have to travel to surrounding states to play basketball, but this situation has also created issues regarding equity. Many student-athletes, largely due to financial reasons, cannot take advantage of the ability to travel to other states to compete. We truly believe that we can, with your trust and support, provide our young people with the same athletic opportunities so many other states are currently offering.

All athletics, and in our case, basketball, provide student-athletes with so many incredible life lessons and experiences. Participation in sports is a large part of a student's holistic education. The relationships that are forged through competition will last the rest of their lives. We continue to see the increases in depression, anxiety, and worse as a result of this pandemic. Our young people have sacrificed so much during this past year and we are currently experiencing a mental health crisis. Opening up sports and allowing student-athletes the opportunity to play basketball and compete against other schools with their teammates would give them a tremendous outlet and a much needed support system to help them through these challenging times.

Please consider letting contact sports start again in Michigan on February 1st. We believe that the rewards and benefits for our student-athletes and coaches participating in sports, particularly as we see continued improvement in the management of the pandemic, are worth the steps needed to allow basketball to be safely played in Michigan. With time running out to provide our student-athletes with important and meaningful experiences that will shape them for a lifetime, now is the time to allow interscholastic competition in basketball before our young people lose these opportunities forever.

Dan Young
Executive Director