

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Education Pre-K -12

BILL: SB 1070

INTRODUCER: Senator Simon

SUBJECT: Electrocardiograms for Student Athletes

DATE: March 10, 2025

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Sabitsch	Bouck	ED	Pre-meeting
2.	_____	_____	HP	_____
3.	_____	_____	RC	_____

I. Summary:

SB 1070 requires electrocardiogram (EKG) assessments for student athletes participating in interscholastic athletic competitions at Florida public and private schools. Specifically, the bill:

- Adds an EKG, when applicable, to the annual medical evaluation that is required for participation in interscholastic athletic competition but allows an exemption by written statement from a physician.
- Requires the bylaws adopted by the Florida High School Athletic Association to include a timeframe for student participants in interscholastic athletic competitions or candidates for interscholastic athletic teams to receive an EKG.
- Provides requirements for parents who object to an EKG on religious grounds and for the licensed practitioner that may exempt a student from the requirement as well as for an attorney preparing a release of liability.

The bill takes effect on July 1, 2025.

II. Present Situation:

About Electrocardiograms

An electrocardiogram (EKG) represents a recording of the heart's electrical activity. An EKG is an integral part of the initial evaluation of a patient suspected of having a cardiac-related problem.¹

The inventor of the EKG in 1902, William Einthoven was named the "father of electrocardiography" and was awarded the Nobel Prize in Medicine in 1924 for his work that laid

¹ National Library of Medicine, National Center for Biotechnology Information, *Electrocardiogram*, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK549803/> (last visited Mar. 4, 2025).

the foundation of the most fundamental technique for investigating heart disorders. The EKG was soon recognized as a robust screening and clinical diagnostic tool, and today it is used globally in almost every healthcare setting.²

The EKG is a non-invasive diagnostic modality that has a substantial clinical impact on investigating the severity of cardiovascular diseases. The use of an electrocardiogram has expanded from simple heart rate and essential rhythm monitoring to interpreting complex arrhythmias, myocardial infarction, and other abnormalities. The EKG is increasingly being used for monitoring patients on antiarrhythmics and other drugs, as an integral part of preoperative assessment of patients undergoing non-cardiac surgery, and for screening individuals in high-risk occupations and those participating in sports. Also, the EKG serves as a research tool for surveillance and experimental trials of drugs with recognized cardiac effects.³

Electrocardiograms for High School Student Athletes

In 2021 the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Governmental Accountability (OPPAGA) published a report that collected information on the following topics:⁴

- Benefits and challenges of requiring EKG assessments for student athletes.
- Cost of EKG assessments
- Accuracy of EKG assessments.
- Current school district practices related to requiring or recommending EKGs for student athletes.
- Nationally recognized or accepted criteria to identify athletes who should receive an EKG assessment.

The report stated that sudden cardiac death, while rare, is the leading cause of non-traumatic deaths among young athletes and provided the following:

- The incidence of sudden cardiac death among high school athletes ranges from 1 in 23,000 to 1 in 300,000.
- Intense athletic activity can trigger sudden cardiac death.
- Athletes often have no symptoms of obvious injury prior to sudden cardiac death.
- Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy is the leading cause of sudden cardiac death in athletes and its prevalence among athletes ranges from 1 in 1,426 to 1 in 1,667 (the prevalence in the general population is 1 in 500).⁵

² National Library of Medicine, National Center for Biotechnology Information, *Electrocardiogram*, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK549803/> (last visited Mar. 4, 2025).

³ *Id.*

⁴ OPPAGA Report, Office of Program Policy Analysis and Governmental Accountability, *Electrocardiograms for High School Student Athletes*, (Dec. 2021), available at <https://oppaga.fl.gov/Documents/Presentations/OPPAGA%20Dec%201%202021%20Presentation%20Slides--EKG--Sec%20Ed%20and%20Career%20Dev.pdf>, at slide 2.

⁵ OPPAGA Report, Office of Program Policy Analysis and Governmental Accountability, *Electrocardiograms for High School Student Athletes*, (Dec. 2021), available at <https://oppaga.fl.gov/Documents/Presentations/OPPAGA%20Dec%201%202021%20Presentation%20Slides--EKG--Sec%20Ed%20and%20Career%20Dev.pdf>, at slide 4.

The report stated that EKG assessments may detect certain heart abnormalities by recording the heart's electrical signals and providing information on strength, speed, rhythm and number of heart beats. The EKG may help identify 60% of diagnoses related to sudden cardiac death.⁶ The EKG is non-invasive, only takes a few minutes, and if abnormal results are found the individual is recommended to seek follow-up with a cardiologist who is trained in diagnosing and treating conditions of the heart and blood vessels.

The report contained information from a study conducted by the Brevard County School District that showed that fewer than 1 percent of student athletes who received an EKG assessment in 2019-2020 had a heart condition that put them at risk for sudden cardiac arrest. Of 5,877 students who received an EKG assessment, 199 or 3.4 percent of students had abnormal EKG assessment results, but only 8 or .01 percent reported a diagnosis that put them at risk of sudden cardiac arrest.⁷ The Brevard County School District began requiring EKG assessments in the 2019-2020 school year for grades 7-12 but authorized parents to opt out for any reason. In the 2020-2021 school year 35 percent of student athletes opted out of receiving an EKG assessment.⁸

The report provided information from two other states, Texas and Pennsylvania, that at that time had passed recent legislation to address use of EKG assessments. Neither state has mandated EKG assessments but have stressed providing information to students and parents about sudden cardiac arrests and EKGs.⁹

The American Heart Association (AHA) asserts that annual prescreening of competitive athletes can improve detection of cardiac abnormalities and minimize the risks associated with athletic participation. However, the AHA does not recommend the use of tests such as a 12-lead EKG or echocardiogram in mandatory preparticipation screening programs. Instead, these tests are best used as follow-up if an initial screening raises suspicions about the presence of a cardiovascular disease. Reasons given include the strain on the healthcare system, access to testing, and the rate of false-positive results.¹⁰

Regulation of Florida High School Athletics

The Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) is designated in Florida law as a governing nonprofit organization of athletics in Florida public schools.¹¹ Any high school in Florida, including charter schools, virtual schools, and home education cooperatives, may become a member of the FHSAA and participate in the activities of the FHSAA. Membership in the FHSAA is not mandatory for any school. A private school that wishes to engage in high

⁶ OPPAGA Report, Office of Program Policy Analysis and Governmental Accountability, *Electrocardiograms for High School Student Athletes*, (Dec. 2021), available at <https://oppaga.fl.gov/Documents/Presentations/OPPAGA%20Dec%201%202021%20Presentation%20Slides--EKG--Sec%20Ed%20and%20Career%20Dev.pdf>, at slide 5.

⁷ *Id.* at slide 19.

⁸ *Id.* at slide 18.

⁹ *Id.* at slide 11.

¹⁰ American Heart Association, *Pre-participation Cardiovascular Screening of Young Competitive Athletes: Policy Guidance*, available at <https://www.heart.org/-/media/Files/About-Us/Policy-Research/Policy-Positions/Healthy-Children-and-Schools/Athlete-Screening.pdf>

¹¹ Section 1006.20(1), F.S.

school athletic competition with a public high school can become a member of the FHSAA. Florida middle schools may also become members of the FHSAA.

The FHSAA is required to adopt bylaws that, unless specifically provided otherwise by statute, establish eligibility requirements for all students who participate in high school athletic competition in its member schools. The FHSAA is specifically required to adopt bylaws that require all students participating in interscholastic athletic competition or who are candidates for an interscholastic athletic team to satisfactorily pass a medical evaluation each year before participating in interscholastic athletic competition. This includes engaging in any practice, tryout, workout, conditioning, or other physical activity, during or outside the school year, associated with the student's candidacy for an interscholastic athletic team.¹²

The FHSAA conducts an annual Sports Participation Survey. The most recent survey found that for the 2023-2024 school year, there were 299,383 student athletes among 19 different sports from an overall student enrollment population of 873,804 from member schools (grades 9-12).¹³

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

SB 1070 amends s. 1002.20, F.S., to require that students receive an electrocardiogram (EKG) before participating in athletics. The bill allows a parent to provide a written statement from a physician stating that the student does not need an EKG.

The bill also amends s. 1006.20, F.S., regarding bylaws adopted by the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) to require each student in the 2026-2027 school year who participates in interscholastic athletic competition or is a candidate for an interscholastic team to receive an EKG.

The bill requires that, beginning in the 2026-2027 school year:

- Each student in grades 6, 7, and 8 who for the first time participates in interscholastic athletic competition or is a candidate for an interscholastic athletic team must receive an EKG.
- Each student in grades 9 through 12 who for the first time participates in interscholastic athletic competition or is a candidate for an interscholastic athletic team must receive an EKG.

The bill also specifies that if a parent objects to the student receiving an EKG on the grounds of the parent's or student's religious tenets or practices, the parent must provide a written release of liability that has been prepared by an attorney in good standing with the Florida Bar. Alternately, the parent may provide a written statement from a licensed practitioner under chapter 458 or 459 of Florida law, which governs medical and osteopathic physicians, and who is in good standing with the practitioner's regulatory board indicating that the student does not require the EKG. Under those circumstances, the student would be allowed to participate in or be a candidate for an interscholastic athletic team.

The bill takes effect on July 1, 2025.

¹² Section 1006.20(2)(c), F.S.

¹³ Florida High School Athletic Association, *Sports Participation Survey (2023-2024)*, available at https://fhsaa.com/documents/2024/7/11/2023_24_Total_Participation_Study_for_website.pdf?id=5591

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

This bill does not have an impact to state revenues or expenditures. The bill requires an electrocardiogram as part of the medical screening requirement for student athletes which could be a cost to the parent or health insurance.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 1002.20 and 1006.20.

IX. Additional Information:

- A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

- B. **Amendments:**

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
