

Dear Representative,

The 24 Athletic Supervisors of the Local Educational Agencies in the State of Maryland are **adamantly opposed to MD House Bill (HB) 0343** due to the equity concerns and negative impact that it will have on the student athletes in Maryland public schools. House Bill 343 creates a larger impact than modifying sports contests in the sport of basketball. Ultimately, legislation of this nature is precedent setting and could lead to additional legislation for the other 22 administered high school sports and politicizing which sports take priorities over other sports. Legislating high school sports to this nature takes away the administrative control of the 24 local educational agencies administrators for interscholastic athletics who best know how to educate, coach, and mentor through education-based athletic programs.

HB0343 is harmful to Maryland schools for several reasons:

- HB0343 challenges the exploitation of student athletes. Events without NFHS and MPSSAA sanctioning may be run by third-party for-profit organizations and promoters that have no educational oversight. Events not sanctioned by the NFHS and MPSSAA may place public school students in events run by non-educational agencies and without safeguards to ensure student safety and protection of exploitation.
- House Bill 343 sets a precedent and different standard for 396 boys and girls basketball programs out of the annual 4,215 varsity high school sports teams. In addition, the 24 LEA's (Local Education Agencies) would be impacted by student athlete participation in other sports seasons, the increased liability of school sponsored athletic activities, oversight of tournaments, eligibility compliance, transportation, facilities, coaching payment, and student safety.
- HB0343 does not authorize state tournament games for basketball or a tournament consisting of six games, which is the maximum number of games a team could play in the state tournament.
- HB0343 does not take into consideration Conference/League Championships and postponed games.
- HB0343 does not provide oversight regarding rules and regulations which are not outlined in the bill, as this house bill supersedes COMAR language. This ensures compliance with season and weekly limitations, out-of-season practice, and sets a fair and equitable standard for statewide participation.

HBO343 is harmful to Specific Individual District Rules and Regulations:

- HBO343 does not take into consideration the monitoring aspect of each individual school system protocols for athletic participation and individual athletes as a participant for the basketball teams. Responsibility of physicals, parent permission slips, eligibility, practice times and availability of facilities, field trip packets which are all part of individual district rules and regulations set by the School System and Board of Education.
- HBO343 does not respect the inequity of different schools incapable of participation and travel expenses that each team may incur to participate in the events. (i.e., Title 1 schools)

- HBO343 will permit unfairness to the schools that do not participate. Schools that do participate will have more opportunities and an advantage to develop as a school team.
- HBO343 does not specify if schools will be responsible financially for teams to travel, overtime coaches pay, athlete/coach liability, officials for tournaments, facility usage fees, insurance and overtime custodial fees.
- HBO343 does not take in account that districts function under strategic rules, regulations and guidelines for the overall safety of our coaches and students athletes.

The interscholastic athletic regulations in COMAR 13A.06.03 are intertwined to ensure safe environments and fair competition that upholds the values of school-based athletics while protecting students from exploitation. Interwoven are regulations on eligibility, sport seasons, limits of participation, penalties for violation of regulations, state tournament authorization, and sanctioning of contests. The amendment process is derived from the local educational leaders for interscholastic athletics and ratified by the State Board of Education. House Bill 343 has the ability to complicate all sections of COMAR by focusing on one sport offering. To maintain the equity and integrity of our state athletic association and allow us to advocate for our student athletes, **we ask that you help keep Maryland's 24 LEA's and the MPSSAA strong by opposing House Bill 0343.**

Thank you for your continued service and support of the Maryland public school system.

Sincerely,



Shirley Diggs
Coordinating Supervisor of Interscholastic Athletics - Area 3
Prince George's County Public Schools