

March 21, 2023
FAVORABLE House Bill 343

Team Melo MD23 strongly supports HB 343.

In the past 5 years, there have been major changes in the way high school basketball players are recruited by the NCAA. Spring and summer basketball (referred to often as AAU) have taken over with recruitable players participating on all star teams in events around the country where college coaches come to evaluate and offer scholarships. The problem this has created is that less student athletes get the opportunity at recruitment and high school coaches and institutions are often left out of the recruitment process in what is most of the time an academic driven decision. Since the high school season takes place in the winter, at the same time as the college season, many college coaches use the winter to focus on their current team and the spring and summer to recruit. In response to this trend, in 2019, the NCAA created two Scholastic Live Periods in the month of June where the only way college coaches can recruit is to watch student-athletes compete with their high school team at NCAA certified events.

In Maryland, DeMatha hosted an event where over 150 college institutions attended and over 200 new scholarships were offered. The event was a huge success and did exactly what was intended and connected college basketball recruiting back to high schools. The problem was that no public schools were allowed to participate. At the time, I was coaching at The Baltimore Polytechnic Institute and we had 9 players that were being looked at for scholarship that were denied the opportunity to showcase themselves in the scholastic live period simply because they were in public school.

With many college coaches looking to the transfer portal for recruitment, it is harder than ever for any high school senior to earn an athletic scholarship in basketball. It is the only sport with a separate calendar for scholastic recruitment and has a unique set of challenges for aspiring student athletes. This makes it more important than ever to make sure families don't feel that the only way to support their child in chasing a college scholarship in basketball is to go to private school. This is why a bill to support MD public schools adjusting to the NCAA's recruiting calendar is necessary.

For these reasons we urge a favorable report on HB 343.

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