

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 343
PUBLIC SCHOOL ATHLETICS AND BASKETBALL TEAM SCHEDULING

Thank you, Madam Chairman and Committee Members for giving me the opportunity to testify in support of Delegate Boyce's bill to provide the guidelines for public school basketball as set forth in House Bill 343.

While the need for the Bill's guidelines for basketball scheduling may not appear to be essential to the educational experience, the opposite is true. Without such guidelines our public-school student athletes, who excel as basketball players and whose academic goals may include higher education, our public school athletes are at a disadvantage. This bill strengthens their opportunities. They will have more and better opportunities to compete in a broader range of settings. More opportunities to play provide student athletes experiences to broaden their exposure to other students and introduce them to new environments. As a high school basketball player in Baltimore County schools, I personally benefitted from the exposure, from the development of social skills and from the teamwork.

For outstanding players, statistics may make the difference in a basketball player's ability to earn basketball scholarships and offers. Recruiters determine their prospective college recruits for scholarships by attending high school regular games, championship games and tournaments. They focus on everything from the number of games won by a team, team dynamics and the merits of individual players. For individual players recruiters consider statistics such as position, height, average points per game, rebounds and assists, and successful foul line shots, 3-point shots, steals and blocks. Recruiters will assess a team's strength looking at the number of games won at home versus away, a team's standings in the Counties and the State. Overall notes gathered on team's statistics and strengths, honors earned, winning streaks, individual standouts factor into how a team ranks, which is an important part of the individual's assessment.

House Bill 343 pushes for athletics in public schools to create a schedule where basketball teams play an equal number of games as their private and Catholic school counterparts. Additionally, it allows teams to play up to four tournament games including those with out of State participants. The Bill will enable public school basketball teams to have more visibility by playing in tournaments where they will be able to display their abilities. This is also a good bill also because it will allow the student athletes to get the exposure from recruiting scouts who attend tournaments where their private and Catholic school counterparts presently get more exposure to recruiters. Under the current system public school athletes often do not receive comparable opportunities. Twenty regular season games for the team that wishes to play in a tournament and twenty-two games for the team that chooses not to go will go far to level the playing field. Not only will this become a better opportunity for the students but for the schools, as it provides a means of advancing public school athletic departments.

Finally, the Bill allows the County Board to decide whether a team shall play in a tournament or a showcase game allowing the County to have an active voice in the process.

I want to see our public-school students get the same opportunities as non-public school student athletes. This bill moves us in that direction. Once again, thank you for the opportunity to testify and to support Delegate Boyce on this Bill.