

SB1034 - Favorable

My name is Dave Collier. I umpire for 2 baseball groups and I am also a football official. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak here today on behalf of all sports officials in support of Senate Bill-1034. This is a bill that is desperately needed in the state of Maryland to protect sports officials. I would like to thank Senator Patterson and others for preparing this bill. We appreciate it.

As you may or may not know, all sporting officials for any sport from pee-wee to high school are all volunteers. We go through rigorous training both on the field and off to become sanctioned. We watch film, take tests and are critiqued by veterans of whatever sport we are officiating. But we are being verbally harassed and insulted by parents, coaches and sometimes even players. There are times when things boil over to physical altercations.

As an official that has personally been assaulted by a parent on the baseball field, I can tell you that, even though the police were called and video was shown, there was nothing that could be done to the parent responsible for this action. As of right now, Maryland is one of 29 states where there is no law that protects sports officials in these types of situations. In this day and age officials can never be sure that if they are approached after a game, or even sometimes during a game, if a weapon of some sort may be drawn against them. Who knows if this will ever happen? Even if it does happen there are no real consequences. It's no worse than simply being pushed down. There

really is nothing to deter this type of behavior. The more it is ignored, the more it will happen.

I am asking you to please pass Senate Bill 1034. It will make any kind of physical altercation with a sports official Misdemeanor of Assault in the Second Degree. This could, in some instances, save us from serious injury or maybe even loss of life.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.