

SB-1034 - Favorable

My name is Michael Schilpp and I am the President of Baltimore Best umpires. On October 6th, 2019, one of my umpires, Mr. David Collier was physically assaulted by a parent/and a player during a baseball game. To date, this assault has not been prosecuted.

Baltimore City police were contacted and responded to scene of the assault. The parent/player fled before they could arrive. Detective Simpson from the Baltimore City Police Department confirmed this statement by the officer that under the "simple assault code", unless the Officer witnessed the assault – and without the name(s) there was nothing more he could do even though there was a video taken from the incident. If we could get the names of the assailants they would enforce the law.

These types of incidents are happening way too often to sports officials everywhere not just only in Maryland.

Maryland is 1 of 29 states that does not have a law that protects sports officials. I stand here today asking you to please pass this law that protects all of us. I have had the opportunity to meet with several Senators and they know my passion for this issue. Someone is going to get seriously hurt – more than they already have. We as sports officials do this for the love of the game, not to make someone win or lose. We are human and sometimes make mistakes. I ask, should that be a reason for us to be harassed/threatened / or assaulted? The answer is NO!

Since May of 2019, I have been made personally aware of 5 incidents where an official has been threatened or assaulted in the State of Maryland. All have been from various geographic areas in the State.

Baltimore City
Baltimore County
Frederick County
Worcester County
Montgomery County

These types of incidents make recruiting and hiring of new officials almost impossible.

The National Association of Sports Officials report that new sports officials in their first 1 to 3 years are quitting at an alarming rate of 70%. You ask why? Because they are being harassed (followed to their vehicles)/threatened/ and even physically assaulted. For the more experienced umpires, this is forcing us to start fighting back or continue and take the abuse. BY fighting back, we expose ourselves to getting charged with assault which does not seem fair. It has been suggested that sports officials carry pepper spray – I can say that this seems like a very bad idea. I see this as a potentially bigger problem than fighting back. Another solution would be all sports officials start quitting and let these parents start officiating games – we all know that will end in more serious violent issues.

The need to stop this persecution of sports officials in the State Of Maryland is right now! We must get protection against these individuals that believe it is ok to follow us to our vehicles after the game, threaten to be waiting for us in the parking lots after they are removed from games because of "their conduct" or the ones that just physically assault us.

Wisconsin and Ohio have now also taken up the task to change their laws to protect their sports officials. They are monitoring how the State of Maryland proceeds to get the law passed that will protect sports officials. I am currently working with NASO to keep them informed.

In closing, we all need to feel safe and know we have some recourse (protection) should an incident occur. Today in the State of Maryland - that does not exist.

By not passing this law, we will be allowing all coaches/parents/ and players the ability to continue to harass/threaten and assault sports officials in Maryland. The time to end these assaults on sports officials in Maryland is right NOW!

Favorable