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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of SB0923 - Public Schools - High School Sports Officiating Services  
- Procurement Requirements**

Mr. Chair, Madame Vice Chair, and members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

SB092 would require Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to ensure that sports officials for boys' and girls' sports are paid at the same rate.

**Background**

During the interim, constituents Doug Silber and Jenn Murphy brought an unexpected issue to my attention—despite existing pay equity laws, high school sports officials for girls' sports were being paid less for performing the same work as officials for boys' sports. While current laws aim to prevent pay disparities based on gender within both girls' and boys' sports, they fall short in addressing pay inequities across girls' and boys' sports, regardless of the official's gender.

The Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) sets standardized pay rates for high school sports officials during playoffs statewide. Outside of that framework, Local Education Agencies (LEAs), through contracts with sports associations and other entities, determine payment rates for officials. This has led to inconsistencies between jurisdictions, and as detailed in Exhibit 1, multiple cases of pay disparities between male and female officials within both girls' and boys' sports.

Through my office's research, we also uncovered the complex network connecting LEAs, sports associations, "assigners" (who manage game scheduling logistics), and the officials themselves. Understanding these dynamics was crucial in shaping our approach to this bill.

**Solution**

SB0923 aims to promote pay equity in high school sports officiating by implementing the following requirements:

- **Equal Pay Standards:** Local school systems must reject any bid or proposal that results in different rates of pay or fees for officiating or assigning officials for comparable boys' and girls' high school sports.

- **Simultaneous Solicitations:** Solicitations for officiating services for similar boys' and girls' sports must be issued at the same time to ensure fairness in the bidding process.
- **Inclusive Bidding Options:** Local school systems may require that bidders include officiating services for both boys' and girls' sports within a single proposal.
- **Uniform Submission Deadlines:** If separate solicitations are issued for boys' and girls' officiating services, they must share the same submission deadlines.
- **Collaborative Bidding Flexibility:** Local school systems may also require prospective bidders to partner, ensuring that any bid for boys' sports officiating services is accompanied by corresponding bids for girls' sports.

These measures aim to close loopholes in existing pay equity laws and ensure fair compensation practices across high school athletics.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on SB0923.