

Good afternoon, Chairman Clippinger, Madam Vice Chair Bartlett,

I am testifying before the Judicial Committee to detail the number of sports officials that are quitting at a rapid pace.

Today, my testimony will direct you to look at the harm that these officials quitting is doing not only to high school athletics, but to youth sports. High school sporting events are being cancelled at an alarming rate because of the lack of officials. The same in youth sports. When these events are being played, they are sometimes officiated by crews being shorthanded. That creates an environment that can become very challenging and can become dangerous for players and officials alike.

37,000 sports officials in Maryland are not looking for more people to be arrested. We just want to be safe. House bill 462 will give us that safety net. The individuals that create these unsafe conditions know they are safe in Maryland because the law protects them. It is important that we show them the State of Maryland will protect us and not allow these types of assaults to continue without repercussions.

Maryland is one of 23 States that does not protect sports officials. The bill that will become law will allow law enforcement to make an arrest based on probable cause – before this bill – they cannot unless they witness the event firsthand.

There are many vacant fields/courts in Baltimore City/County and surrounding areas. These fields should be full of young/older adults playing sports. The lack of officials keeps this from happening.

In closing, there has been numerous written testimonies sent in from many officials all over the State of Maryland, with several of them contacting members of this committee personally and their own state Delegates asking the same request – a favorable report in moving one step closer to protecting those that allow the children to enjoy participating in these events. Without sports officials, there are no sporting events.

Thank you today for your time and consideration of House bill 462.