



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB462 – Criminal Law – Second Degree Assault – Sports Official  
February 11, 2025

Good afternoon Chair Klippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, esteemed members of the committee, I am Delegate Stuart Schmidt from District 33B. I bring this bill before you as a call to help for sports officials. This bill has been in the Senate for many years.

This bill is for the purpose of prohibiting a person from intentionally causing physical injury to another if the person knows or has reason to know that the other is an official, an umpire, a referee, or a judge officiating at a sporting event; authorize a police officer to arrest a person without a warrant if the police officer has probable cause to believe that the person has committed a certain assault; and generally relating to second degree assault. This bill in an enhancement bringing it in line with police, fire, judges.

Over 50% of officials have reported that harassment made them feel unsafe while officiating. Almost 12% who responded have been physically assaulted. This is not just for adult officials, there are junior officials included in this as well. In one instance, a junior official was followed to his car. This morning Good Morning America reported about a dad in Washington State who was charged with assault on Sunday for shoving 2 child referees at his son's hockey game. He went onto the ice and shoved the referees which led to them falling on the ice and getting hurt.

According to the National Association of Sports Officials (NASO), close to 90% of sport officials report being harassed while, before, during or after a sporting event. 18 other states have this as law.

While it is already illegal for an individual to commit assault on another, sports officials are not currently included in the Criminal Law 3-203 article which authorizes police officers to make a warrantless arrest with probable cause under Criminal Law 2-203. HB462 specifies that assault against a sports official can lead to an immediate arrest with proper probable cause.

I request a favorable report from the committee for HB 462. Thank you.