

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION  OF SPORTS OFFICIALS

# PRESS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE ON DECEMBER 17, 2019

## YOUR VOICE IS NEEDED TO ADVANCE ASSAULT LEGISLATION IN MARYLAND

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As many of you may be aware, a recent physical assault on a Maryland sports official was ultimately not prosecutable. This incident has also highlighted the fact that, unlike many other states, Maryland does not have strong laws in place supporting sports officials who are victims of menacing harassment or assault.

There is good news, however. This type of legislation is currently being drafted by Senator Klausmeier, and your voice is needed in support of this effort. Please consider contacting your state senator about this possible legislation that will go a long way toward ensuring the well-being of all sports officials in Maryland.

You can speak from your own experience or craft a message from this sample:

*I'm calling/writing to ask you to co-sponsor or support the bill being drafted by Senator Klausmeier that will enhance penalties for those who harass or assault sports officials, in line with what more than 24 other states have already done.*

*I've seen firsthand the problems caused when we can't recruit and retain sports officials because of the increasingly difficult environments a handful of spectators have sometimes created at sporting events.*

*This type of bill won't be the end of bad behavior completely, but it would put a spotlight on a growing problem in Maryland and will only help bring awareness to the issue as well as support recruitment of officials.*

**Assault Bill/Harassment Bill Supporting Points**

Courtesy of the National Association of Sports Officials (<https://www.naso.org/survey/>)

- *The average age of sports officials across the country is 53 years old*
- *Nearly 48% of male officials have felt unsafe or feared for their safety in connection to officiating.*
- *Nearly 45% of female officials have felt unsafe or feared for their safety in connection to officiating.*
- *57% of sports officials believe that sportsmanship is getting worse. Youth, adult recreation, and high school levels are identified as the worst sportsmanship levels.*
- *Parents (40%), coaches (30%) and fans (18%) cause the most sportsmanship problems.*
- *43% of officials and officiating leaders believe that most new officials quit within the first 1-3 years.*
- *13% of officials have been assaulted by either a fan, coach, or player.*
- *The average starting age for a sports official is now 40-45 years old. Thirty years ago, the average starting age for a sports official was 20-25 years old.*

You can find the senator from your district [HERE](#).

Sports cannot function without officials. Please consider the importance to our communities that youth sports carry, and remember how important your voice as a voter and as an official truly is in this effort to ensure the safety of all sports officials in Maryland.

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The National Association of Sports Officials is the world's largest organization for sports officials at every level and all sports. More than 29,000 sports officials from around the world belong to NASO, enjoying member benefits and supporting an organization that advocates for sports officials and that helps them maintain the highest level of officiating skills.

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