



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 27, 2024

**SB 842 – Assault Against a Sports Official Act of 2024**

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

According to the National Association of Sports Officials (NASO), close to 90% of sports officials report being harassed while before, during, or after a sporting event. Over 50% of officials have said that harassment made them feel unsafe while officiating, and 13% of sports officials have been physically assaulted by a fan, coach, or player.<sup>1</sup>

Senate Bill 842 would specify that the crime of misdemeanor second-degree assault includes assault against a sports official. The misdemeanor would impose a fine up to \$2,500 and/or imprisonment not exceeding 10 years.

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. SB 842 specifies that assault against a sports official can lead to an immediate arrest with proper probable cause.

Team sports at every level cannot exist without officials. Maryland should join 18 other states including Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and California in specifying that sports officials are included in second-degree assault.<sup>2</sup>

I respectfully ask for a favorable report on SB 842.

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<sup>1</sup> Your Voice is Needed to Advance Legislation in Maryland

<https://www.naso.org/your-voice-is-needed-to-advance-legislation-in-maryland/>

<sup>2</sup> Laws on Assault of a Sports Official

<https://www.cga.ct.gov/2013/rpt/2013-R>

[0446.htm#:~:text=We%20found%2018%20states%20with,%2C%20Texas%2C%20and%20West%20Virgini](https://www.cga.ct.gov/2013/rpt/2013-R0446.htm#:~:text=We%20found%2018%20states%20with,%2C%20Texas%2C%20and%20West%20Virgini)  
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