WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2025 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 2774

By Delegates Browning, Stephens, Lucas, Dean, Campbell, Leavitt, Foggin, W. Clark, Riley, Ferrell, and Hornby

[Introduced February 21, 2025; referred to the Committee on the Judiciary]

A BILL to amend and reenact §61-2-15a of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to crimes against athletic officials; clarifying that victims include participants; establishing minimum jail penalties; creation definitions; authorizing a person convicted of the offenses to be banned from certain sports events; requiring written notice to the person banned; establishing that a violation of the ban is a form of trespass; and creating criminal penalties.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 2. CRIMES AGAINST THE PERSON.

§61-2-15a. Assault, battery on athletic officials or participants; penalties.

(a) If any person commits an assault as defined in ~~subsection (b), section nine of this article~~ §61-2-9(b) of this code, to the person of an athletic official or participant during the time the official is acting as an athletic official or participant, the offender is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not more than $500~~, or~~ and confined in jail not less than five days nor more than six months~~, or both fined and confined~~.

(b) If any person commits a battery, as defined ~~in subsection (c), section nine of this article~~ §61-2-9(c) of this code, against an athletic official or participant during the time the official is acting as an athletic official or participant, the offender is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not more than $1,000~~, or~~ and confined in jail not less than 10 days nor more than twelve months, or both fined and confined.

(c) For the purpose of this section, athletic official or participant means a player on a sports team, person at a sports event who enforces the rules of that event, ~~such as~~ including, but not limited to, an umpire or referee, or a person who supervises the participants, ~~such as~~ including, but not limited to, a coach, assistant coach, or any other official team members during the course of a game or related event.

(d)(1) In addition to the criminal penalties set forth in this section, a county board of education or a governing board for a state institution of higher education may provide written notification to any person convicted of an offense under subsection (a) or subsection (b) of this section that he or she is banned from all state school sports events or school-sponsored sports events as a result of the conviction for a minimum of 365 days.

(2) Any person receiving the written notification set forth in subdivision (1) of this subsection who refuses to leave the premises of any state school sports event or school-sponsored sports event upon request shall be subject to prosecution pursuant to the provisions of §61-3B-1 *et seq*. of this code

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to modify the criminal and administrative penalties for assault or battery on athletic officials.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.