

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

## **2026 REGULAR SESSION**

**Introduced**

### **House Bill 5246**

By Delegate Hornbuckle

[Introduced February 05, 2026; referred to the  
Committee on the Judiciary]

- 1 A BILL to amend and reenact §61-2-15a of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating  
2 to increasing the fines for conviction of assault or battery of athletic officials.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

## **ARTICLE 2. CRIMES AGAINST THE PERSON.**

### **§61-2-15a. Assault, battery on athletic officials; penalties.**

- 1 (a) If any person commits an assault, as defined in §61-2-9(b), to the person of an athletic  
2 official during the time the official is acting as an athletic official, the offender is guilty of a  
3 misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not ~~more~~ less than \$500 nor more than  
4 \$1,000, or confined in jail not more than six months, or both fined and confined.

- 5 (b) If any person commits a battery, as defined in §61-2-9(c), against an athletic official  
6 during the time the official is acting as an athletic official, the offender is guilty of a misdemeanor  
7 and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not ~~more~~ less than \$1,000 nor more than \$3,000, or  
8 confined in jail not more than twelve months, or both fined and confined.

- 9 (c) For the purpose of this section, "athletic official" means a person at a sports event who  
10 enforces the rules of that event, such as an umpire or referee, or a person who supervises the  
11 participants, such as a coach.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to increase the penalties for persons convicted of assault or battery upon athletic officials: the Safe Play Act.

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