

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

## **2026 REGULAR SESSION**

### **Introduced**

## **House Bill 4999**

By Delegates Browning, McCormick, Stephens,

Campbell, Akers, and Foggin

[Introduced January 30, 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 crimes against athletic officials; clarifying that victims include participants; establishing  
3 minimum jail penalties; creation definitions; authorizing a person convicted of the offenses  
4 to be banned from certain sports events; requiring written notice to the person banned;  
5 establishing that a violation of the ban is a form of trespass; creating certain exemptions for  
6 participating athletes; 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.**

1 (a) If any person commits an assault as defined in ~~subsection (b), section nine of this article~~  
2 §61-2-9(b) of this code to the person of an athletic official or participant during the time the official  
3 is acting as an athletic official or participant, the offender is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon  
4 conviction thereof, shall be fined not less than \$250, nor more than \$500 ~~or and~~ confined in jail not  
5 more than six months. ~~or both fined and confined.~~

6 (b) If any person commits a battery, as defined in ~~subsection (c), section nine of this article~~  
7 §61-2-9(c) of this code against an athletic official or participant during the time the official is acting  
8 as an athletic official or participant, the offender is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction  
9 thereof, shall be fined not less than \$500, nor more than \$1,000 ~~or and~~ confined in jail not more  
10 than ~~twelve months~~ one year, or both fined and confined.

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

16 (d)(1) In addition to the criminal penalties set forth in this section, a county board of  
17 education or a governing board for a state institution of higher education may provide written

18 notification to any person convicted of an offense under subsection (a) or subsection (b) of this  
19 section that he or she is banned from all state school sports events or school-sponsored sports  
20 events as a result of the conviction for a minimum of 365 days.

21 (2) Any person receiving the written notification set forth in subdivision (1) of this  
22 subsection who refuses to leave the premises of any state school sports event or school-  
23 sponsored sports event upon request shall be subject to prosecution pursuant to the provisions of  
24 §61-3B-1 et seq. of this code.

25 (e) Participants who are players on a sports team in the game are exempt from prosecution  
26 under this section for acts, including, but limited to, hard fouls, committed during the sporting  
27 event, provided such acts are within the scope of the rules or nature of the sport.

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

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