

SPORTS OFFICIALS LEGISLATIVE SCORECARD

Has your state passed laws related to assault and/or harassment of officials, officials' liability or independent contractor status? Those issues impact sports officials and the officiating industry. Many states have realized the importance of addressing those topics.

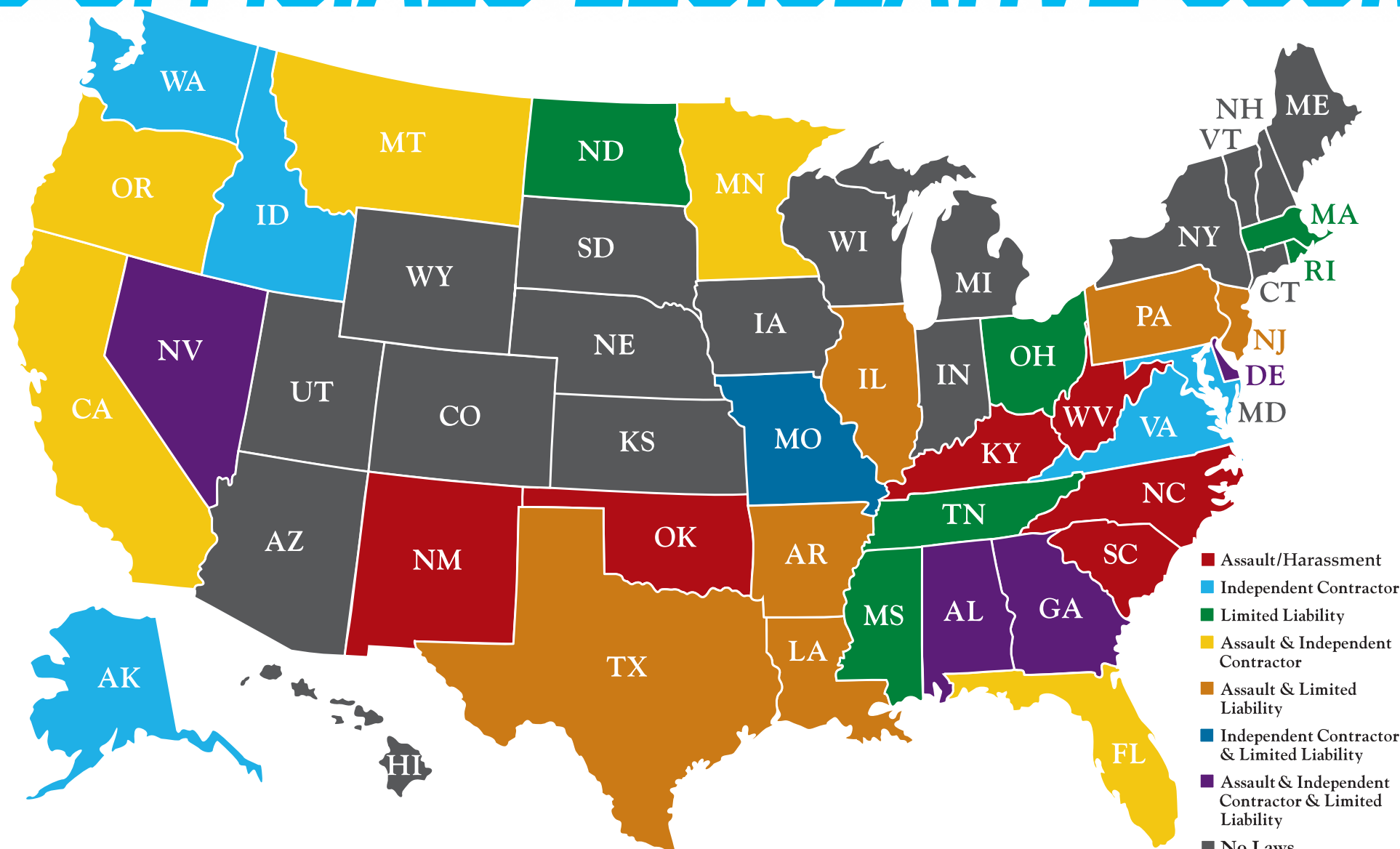
Sports officials should be able to perform their duties without threat of personal injury, administrative hearings or litigation because of their game calls. State legislators can show support for those who officiate by passing laws to protect them.

NASO has been bringing attention to assault/harassment, liability and independent contractor issues for years. The map, updated for 2020, displays the states that have passed laws dealing with those issues. There are currently 21 states that have officiating assault and/or harassment laws (including 19 with criminal laws and two with civil statutes), 16 with limited liability legislation and 14 states with independent contractor laws. In addition, three states – Idaho, Washington and Missouri – have supportive resolutions for officials. How does your state match up? If there is work to be done, consider getting involved in pushing for legislation.

Pass Legislation in Your State

Since 1984, when NASO first submitted model legislation regarding assaults against officials, members and legislators have used such models to construct their own legislative bills.

There is no foolproof plan to get the job done. Each state handles legislation differently, and it is up to the local constituency to manage the process effectively. It is NASO's goal that individual members utilize the proposed legislative models and work with their local associations and legislators to construct viable laws. Before you do anything else, it's a good idea to do some research. Request an NASO Assault Legislation Packet and review the legislation resources at naso.org.



Legislation Updates

Below are updates on recent state legislative efforts. Some of the legislative efforts were stalled as a result of COVID-19 restrictions.

Hawaii – The Hawaii legislature introduced two bills in January to protect officials. Both were referred to the Senate judiciary committee on Jan. 23. SB 2549, which establishes assault of a sports official as a class C felony, is still in committee. However, the Senate judiciary committee passed SB 2612 as amended. The bill allows the court to enjoin a

defendant from attending any sports event of the type at which the offense occurred for up to 12 months when convicted of certain assault or terroristic threatening and the victim of the offense is a sports official engaged in the lawful discharge of duties. After approval, the SB 2612 was moved to the House judiciary committee. The House judiciary committee recommended on March 12 that the bill pass. No additional action was taken at press time.

Iowa – The 2020 Iowa legislature decided not to boost the penalties for assaulting sports officials. HB 2043

and SB 2023, which addressed the issue, were introduced in January, but were permanently tabled in the judiciary committee.

Kansas – HB 2520 increases the penalty for assault and battery against a sports official while they are on duty at an athletic facility. The bill was introduced on Jan. 29 and it was referred to the Committee on Federal and State Affairs on March 10.

Kentucky – HB 65, referred to as the "Good Sports Bill" was introduced on Jan. 7. The legislation creates the crime of intimidation of a sports official as a Class A misdemeanor,

punishable by up to 12 months in jail. The bill was sent to the House Judiciary committee on Jan. 10. The bill passed 92-4 and was sent to the Senate Judiciary committee on March 17.

Maryland – SB 691, which was introduced on Jan. 25, proposed adding officials to those already protected by enhanced penalties for assault, such as firefighters and medical personnel. The bill received an unfavorable report by judicial proceedings and was withdrawn.

Missouri – Missouri lawmakers proposed HB 1803 and HB 1809

in January to help protect sports officials. HB 1803, which establishes the offense of harassment of a sports official, did not move past introduction. However, HB 1809, which expands the definition of special victim to include sports officials, passed the committee on rules and legislative oversight on Feb. 26. It was placed on the informal calendar on May 1.

New York – Lawmakers re-introduced sports officials' protection legislation in New York in January. SB 6747 makes the intentional causing of physical injury to a sports official a class D felony of assault in the second degree and creates a class B misdemeanor of aggravated harassment of a sports official. The bill was referred to the Senate Codes committee.

Ohio – HB 208, which seeks to amend section 2903.13 of the Ohio Revised Code to increase the penalty for assault if the victim is acting as an official or the assault is committed in retaliation for the victim's actions as an official, was passed by the Ohio House Criminal Justice Committee on May 13 after a fourth hearing. It now moves to the full House of Representatives. HB 208 and SB 118 were first introduced in early 2019, seeking to prevent assaults on sports officials.

Pennsylvania – It's illegal under existing state law to assault a sports official, but Pennsylvania joined states working toward making it illegal to harass a sports official. Rep. Anita Astorino Kulik, D-Allegheny, solicited co-sponsors for legislation in a Jan. 24 Memorandum, but no bill was introduced as of press time.

Wisconsin – Wisconsin AB 735 called for harassment and intimidation of officials to be a crime punishable by up to a \$10,000 fine and nine months in jail. The legislation was introduced in January and then referred to the committee on criminal justice and public safety. It did not pass because of Senate Joint Resolution 1.

Go to naso.org for the latest legislation information and to download a pdf of this year's map.