

SPORTS OFFICIALS LEGISLATIVE SCORECARD

Has your state passed laws related to assault and/or harassment of sports officials, officials' liability and independent contractor status? State laws criminalizing attacks and harassment of officials serve as a deterrent and tell prosecutors, judges and juries that such acts are to be taken seriously. Limited liability laws are an added protection to exempt officials (sometimes only volunteer officials) from liability for injuries unless they are grossly negligent. Independent contractor laws classify officials as such – at least for the purposes of workers' compensation.

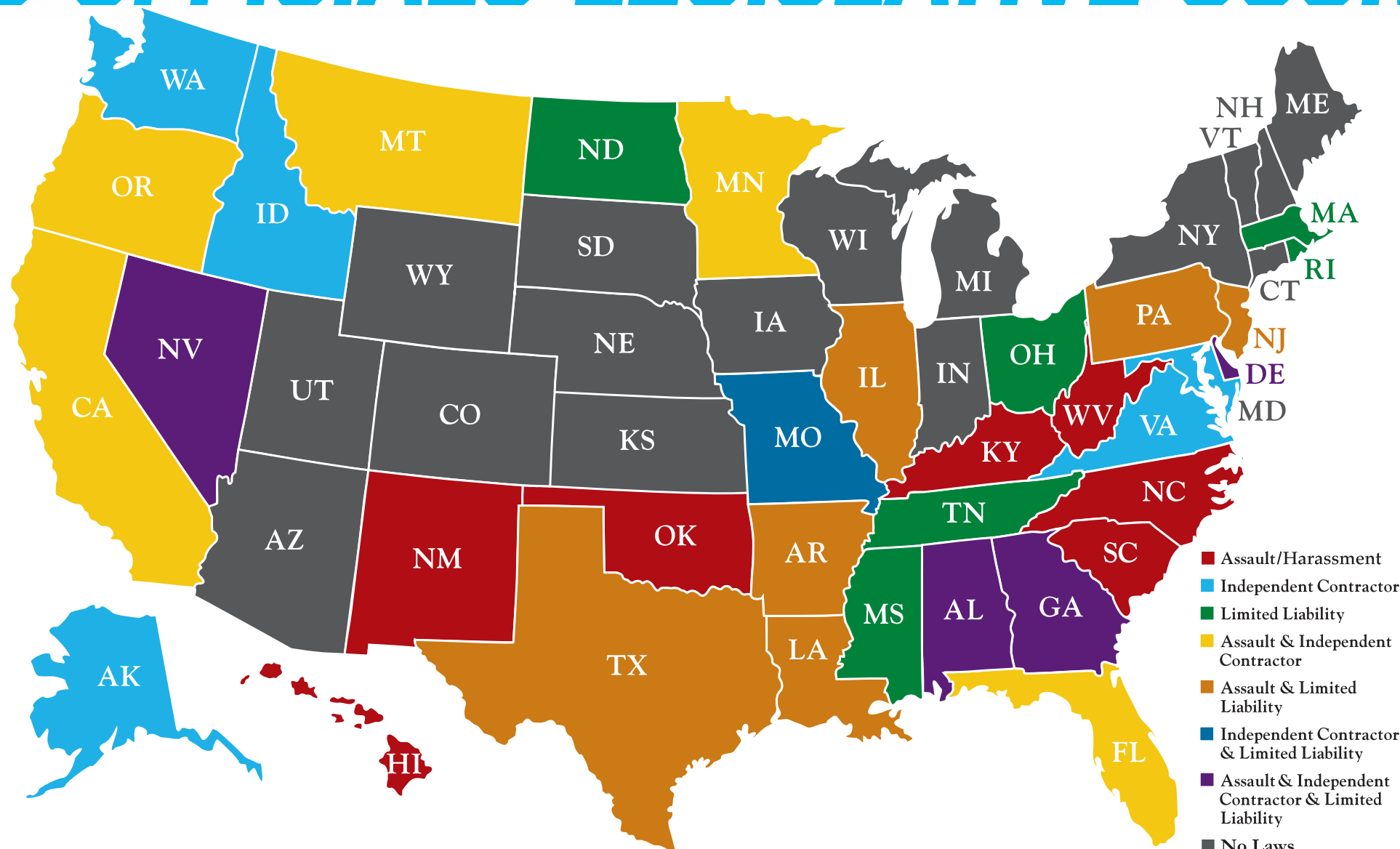
While the scope of state legislation varies, sports officials should be able to perform their duties without threat of personal injury, administrative hearings or litigation because of their game calls. State legislators can show support for those who officiate by passing laws to protect them.

NASO has been bringing attention to assault/harassment, liability and independent contractor issues for years. The map, updated for 2022, displays the states that have passed laws dealing with those issues. There are currently 22 states that have officiating assault and/or harassment laws (including 20 with criminal laws and two with civil statutes), 17 with limited liability legislation and 15 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 fool-proof 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 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 visit naso.org.

Legislation Updates

Following are the most recent state legislative efforts and the status of the bills as of press time.

Kansas – HB 2542, sponsored by State Representatives Mark Samsel,

Brian Bergkamp and Megan Lynn, was introduced Jan. 25 and referred to the Committee on Judiciary. The bill would create the crime of abuse of a sports official and provide criminal penalties. A hearing for the bill, at which multiple proponents shared testimony, was held on Feb. 9.

Kentucky – The Kentucky House of Representatives voted on Feb. 15 to pass HB 220 that would make it a Class A misdemeanor to intimidate youth, high school and college sports officials in the

state. Rep. David Hale, a former high school official, is a lead sponsor for the bill. At press time, the legislation was in the Senate Judiciary Committee for review and consideration. Kentucky is already among the 22 states that have a law protecting sports officials, so the current legislation would serve to enhance protection.

Michigan – HB 4572 was introduced by Rep. Gary Eisen on March 24, 2021, and then referred to the Committee on Rules and

Competitiveness. The bill seeks to establish sentencing guidelines for the crime of assaulting a sports official. No further action has been reported during the 2021-22 legislative session.

Minnesota – HF33, sponsored by State Representatives John Huot, Greg Boe and Rob Ecklund, was introduced in January 2021 and then re-referred to the Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee on March 24. The bill calls for providing enhanced penalties for

assaulting a sports official, amending Minnesota Statutes.

New York – SB 5911, which would upgrade the penalties for assault and harassment, was introduced by Sen. Mike Martucci and referred to the Senate Codes Committee on Jan. 5. SB 2639 and AB 9840, introduced by Sen. Patrick M. Gallivan and Assemblyman William Conrad, call for modifying the state's penal law governing harassment and aggravated assault to include sports officials. Both bills were sent to the Codes Committees.

Ohio – HB 44, introduced Feb. 3, 2021 and sponsored by State Representatives Bill Roemer and Joseph A. Miller III, seeks to amend section 2903.13 of the Revised Code to increase the penalties for assault if the victim is acting as a sports official or the assault is committed in retaliation for the victim's actions as a sports official. The bill passed in the House on June 25, 2021 and is currently being considered in the Senate Judiciary Committee. The most recent hearing occurred on April 5. Three proponents gave testimony in favor of the bill.

Pennsylvania – HB 1897, sponsored by State Rep. Anita Astorino Kulik, was referred to the Judiciary Committee on Sept. 25, 2021. The bill would amend Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in assault, providing for the offense of harassment of sports officials.

Tennessee – HB 1761 and SB 2833, introduced by State Rep. Brandon Ogles and Sen. Joey Hensley, establish assaults against sports officials as a Class E felony or Class A misdemeanor, depending on the nature of the assault. The bills were introduced in January and February and referred to the Criminal Justice Subcommittee and the Senate Judiciary Committee. ■

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