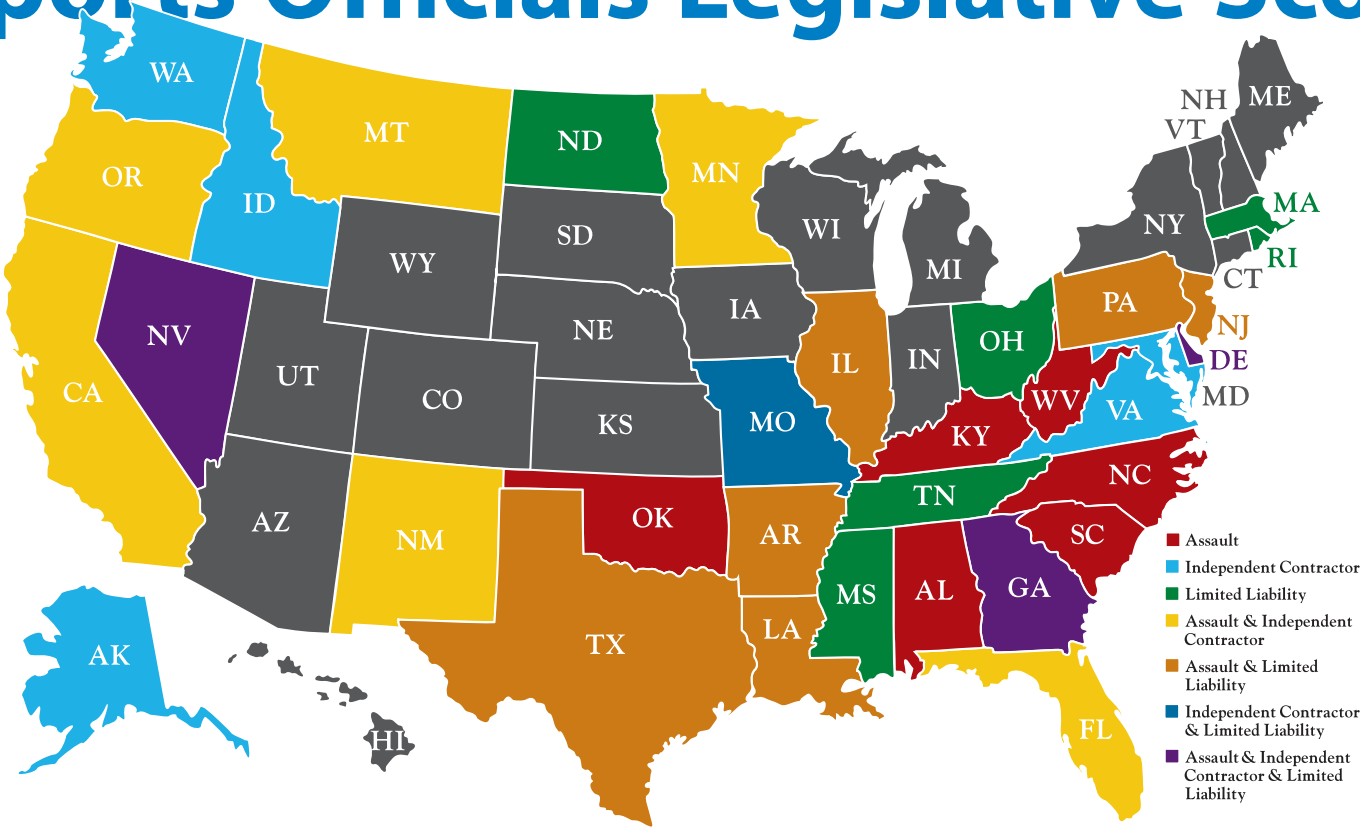


2014 Sports Officials Legislative Scorecard

Has your state passed laws pertaining to assaults on officials, officials' liability or independent contractor status? Those three issues impact sports officials tremendously. And 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. Being a referee or umpire is no easy task. State legislators can show support for the men and women who officiate on the courts and fields by passing laws to protect them.

NASO has been bringing attention to assault, liability and independent contractor issues for years. The map, updated for 2014, displays the states that have passed laws dealing with those issues. There are currently 21 states that have officiating assault laws (including 19 with criminal laws and two with civil statutes), 16 with limited liability legislation and 14 states with independent contractor laws. How does your state score? If there is work to be done, you can get involved.



official as a result of the performance of duty at a sports event, but the bill was deferred by the Judicial Committee on Feb. 25.

- In Massachusetts, HB 1605, which would establish a penalty for assault against sports officials, was first introduced in 2013 by Rep. Angelo Scaccia and referred to committee, but the bill reporting date was extended this year by the House and Senate to June 30.

- New Hampshire legislators introduced SB 320, which establishes a specific penalty for simple assault of a sports official at a sports event, in December 2013. On March 13, the bill was referred to Interim Study by the Senate.

- Connecticut HB 5486, which would establish an enhanced penalty for the assault of an umpire, referee or other amateur sports official, was introduced in February. The House referred the bill to the Joint Committee on Judiciary on March 4.

New Youth Referee Law in Kentucky

Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear signed a bill into law on April 14 making it legal for kids under 14 to referee youth sports and get paid for it.

Teen referee Nathaniel Rase was the reason for the push for the new law. Rase made headlines after Lexington police officer Keith Spears was cited for confronting the teen after a game.

Following the incident, someone anonymously let the Kentucky Labor Department know that Rase, 13, was working illegally. Representative Ryan Quarles proposed the bill to get the law changed.

Concussion Legislation Passes in All States

According to USA Football, all states and the District Columbia have passed legislation related to concussions. Officials should be familiar with the legislation in their state related to concussions that occur in athletic events and understand if it impacts them.

find out what specific legislation is in place. And if your state does not have needed laws in place, you can get involved.

1. Contact your local association.

Share with your association what other states have done. Move forward as a united group.

2. Circulate a petition.

Ask members of your association and area officials association to sign a petition online or in person asking your lawmakers to take action.

3. Gather information.

Gather and present information to legislators about incidents that have happened in your state that apply, such as officiating assaults, etc.

4. Get on the phone or Internet.

Contact legislators and ask to meet

with them to present information that may help to pass a law.

5. Follow up.

After talking and meeting with your legislators, follow up with a thank you letter and tell them that you will follow their progress. Keep the topic in the forefront.

Assault Legislation Information Available Online

For the latest legislation information, visit naso.org. There you will find legislation status in each state, information about model legislation and specific state assault legislation. You can also get more information about what you can do if you are interested in getting legislation passed in your state. Information about how

to access information about recent assaults is available as well.

Kansas Proposes Officials Assault Legislation

Kansas lawmakers are working to protect officials through increasing the penalties for those who attack them. The proposed bill would elevate the crime for assault and battery against a sports official to a high level misdemeanor.

As of presstime, the last reported action for Kansas House Bill 2532 was a House Hearing on Feb. 17.

John Dehan, of Call the Game, a Kansas City-area group that works with officials for youth to high school activities, said there had been reports of three assaults in the past

three summers to his organization.

"Violence should not be tolerated in any situation, but specifically, violence committed in public has perhaps a more profound effect on society," said Rep. Larry Campbell, an Olathe Republican. "It has been reported to me that sports officials are seeing a dramatic increase in violence against them. Many times this occurs in front of small children."

SOURCE: TOPEKA CAPITAL-JOURNAL

Other State Assault Actions:

- The Mississippi legislators proposed legislation included assault protections under HB 1177 in 2014, but the bill died in committee.

- Hawaii SB 2621 called for making it a Class C felony to assault a sports

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 the proposed legislative models and work with local 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. Contact your state government to