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From: Mike McLarney <mmclarney@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 11, 2026 11:28 AM
To: House Judiciary Committee; rifoasecretary21@gmail.com
Cc: Esposito; Joe Esposito; Wayne Griffin
Subject: Bill to Protect Sports Officials in Rhode Island

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Gentlemen and Ladies,

Over the past 50 years, I have been a baseball umpire, a wrestling referee, and a soccer official.

In that time, I have been subjected to many forms of abuse from fans, spectators, coaches and coaching staff, and competitors, and subjected to uncalled for forms of either verbal, mental, and many times abuse bordering on the physical, I say bordering on the physical with many times the coach or coaches or spectators and sometimes parents trying to loom over me and intimidate me. A fellow referee friend of mine, had to be police escorted from an event many years ago and subsequently gave up the sport. A few years ago I testified in front of an MIAA subcommittee to warn them of impending impacts to their referee cadre and its shrinking numbers because of this type of abuse.

This syndrome affects all sports as no one wants to be subjected to the many and varied forms of abuse, that can be generated. So I would urge any type of Bill to Protect Sports Officials in Rhode Island be instituted, which would certainly improve the number and quality of officials within the state and in surrounding states, since many officials cross state lines to assist other states to cover their athletic contests.

Sincerely,
Mike McLarney
NCAA/RIWOA/MIWOA/USWOA Wrestling Official
RIWA State Vice Chair
MWA State Director Of Officials
National Wrestling Hall of Fame Inductee