

Subject: HB-5486

Dear John,

I left you a message at home, but want to follow up and ask for your support for HB-5486. Assaults on sports officials have grown by leaps and bounds across the country. With over 20 states passing legislation to strengthen already existing assault laws, the time is right for Connecticut to do likewise.

The men and women who officiate athletic contests, deserve your support and that of all others on the committee. Personally, I have been umpiring baseball for 49 years. I have been verbally accosted and threatened in that time, and have observed other officials being accosted as well. These are games, nothing more. However, as you well know, people cross the line, especially parents who live their lives vicariously through their offspring. There is no place for this, and nowadays, young people, who wish to become officials and work youth games, for very little pay, are being physically accosted. When such incidents occur, we need strong legislation to be able to prosecute the attacker(s) to the fullest extent of the law and not just give them a "slap on the wrist." A few years ago, a young teenager, umpiring a baseball game, in the Midwest, ejected the coach for arguing with him about a call. At the conclusion of the game, as the boy was leaving, the coach re-appeared with a gun, and fired it at the young man. Totally uncalled for, and a good reason why we need assault legislation in Connecticut.

As a member of the National Association of Sports Officials, I receive Referee magazine, a monthly publication. Every month it seems there is another article about an official being attacked at some game. Our society is out of control when events like these occur. We are losing officials as a result, and at some point, if this continues, we may well not have enough people to officiate, and then what.

All of us who officiate, do it for the love of the game and to give back to a sport we love. For me, without sports, I do not know what would have become of my life. Not only do coaches have an opportunity to help young people grow into solid citizens, but so too do officials.

I ask for your support, and would also ask that you please reply to this e-mail and let me know your position on HB-5486. Having been so kind to my championship teams, and having been responsible for getting our first Windsor High Hall of Fame class a proclamation, I ask that you now support this bill regarding assaults on athletic officials.

Thanks very much for taking the time to read my thoughts, and continued success as a fine representative of the citizens of Connecticut. Those of us who know you, are proud of you and the service you have provided to the citizens of Connecticut.

Barry Chasen
President
Hartford Board of Approved
Baseball Umpires

Dear Committee Members,

While I sent you a copy of the e-mail I sent to Senator Kissel, I would say that if you remove the personal reference to Senator Kissel, the main part of the e-mail is pertinent to all of you.

I want to add that as president of the Hartford Board of Approved Baseball Umpires, I head a group of 170 umpires, one of nine state approved baseball umpiring chapters of the Connecticut Board of Approved Baseball Umpires. In addition to my 49 years as an umpire, I was also a teacher/coach at both New London High School and Windsor High School. I taught for 37 years and coached for 38, 34 at the high school level and four summers. In addition, in the late 60's/early 70's I played for what was considered the top semi-pro baseball team in New England. Even then, although nowhere near as much as now, officials were accosted by players and fans, and it probably should have been considered then, this assault legislation. It was not, but it is never too late to implement it, and hopefully all of you understand and will support this definite need for Connecticut Sports Officials.

Thanks for your time and efforts on behalf of all sports officials in Connecticut.

Barry Chasen
President
Hartford Board of Approved
Baseball Umpires