

Good morning, thank you for taking the time to listen to my statement regarding House Bill 208

I am an OHSAA official for baseball, volleyball, football and basketball in the Dayton, Ohio region. On the evening of Saturday, August 31, 2019 I was working with my crew as the Umpire at the Roger Bacon vs. Dunbar varsity football game at Welcome Stadium in Dayton, Ohio. During this game, a player disagreed with a call and head butt me on the right side of my face with his helmet on. After this he took his helmet off and went towards another official in a threatening manner, but was escorted off the field by his teammates and coaches. The police were called and a report was filed. The player is 17 years old, technically a juvenile.

We ended up going to the ER the next day, Sunday, September 1st, because the headache I had was the worst I have ever experienced. They ordered CT scans and I was diagnosed with a concussion. The headaches the first couple of days were worse than I have ever had. Two weeks later I was still having occasional headaches. I am a very active person, and to not be able to do much at all for a week after was extremely hard for me. Bright lights, too much tv and sound would make my head pound. I spent a lot of time just laying down with my eyes closed. My wife had to do a lot for me all while working and taking care of our household.

I was not able to officiate at all for over a week and at first just went back to volleyball, going back to football after almost 2 weeks. At the time I was driving for Uber/Lyft since losing my job back in March and did not go back for a while because I wanted to be 100% confident in having passengers in my vehicle first. After a few weeks I was able to manage the headaches with just ibuprofen.

Through all of this I missed out on roughly \$2,500 income through driving and officiating. We are also faced with a few thousand dollars of medical bills from the ER, testing, medications and subsequent doctor visits. The stress of having no income, not providing for my family and wondering how we are going to cover the medical bills was probably the hardest part of this.

Mentally, this whole experience was extremely hard also. I struggled with the decision to stop officiating altogether. Something I have been doing for 20 years, and after one horrible incident I was wondering if I could go back. Especially to football, a sport I love. I replay that moment when he struck me often, at first it was every day, multiple times per day. I had a very hard time sleeping for a while. Now, every time I officiate, I think of this incident. I wonder if something will happen. My wife wonders if something will happen. When I went back to officiating, my wife wanted to go every event at first because she was worried. She worried about something happening or me getting a headache and not being comfortable driving home. This didn't only happen to me, it happened to both of us.

As an official, and family member of an official, you know there is potential to be injured during a game. You do not think that injury is going to be the result of the deliberate actions of someone though. As officials we expect to be yelled at, our family expects it and you learn to deal with it. You do not expect to be assaulted or threatened. Both of which I believe are happening more lately. I have officiated a basketball game that we had to delay until someone was removed after threatening to come back with a gun and shoot one of my partners. I have now been physically assaulted. There need to be consequences to these actions.

At this time, the young man that head butt me has been charged with Felonious Assault causing serious physical harm and there has been a motion filed to transfer him to adult court. Most likely though he is going to get away with basically a slap on the wrist after causing me and my family much physical/emotional pain and financial hardship. He could have caused so much more damage, even

death from this headbutt. There could be long term damage that I will have to face in the future. I was lucky to just get a concussion, but the next person may not be. I firmly believe I, and other officials like me, should be given the same protections as teachers, bus drivers, etc. We are paid by the schools, but are not considered employees of the schools and not offered the same protections they are. If there are not serious consequences people will think actions like this are not a big deal. They can get away with retaliating for a bad call with very little punishment. I believe overall sports will suffer if this is not passed.

Sincerely,
Scott Bistrek