
JAY A. COLE

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June 12, 2023

Representative Bill Roemer
The Ohio House of Representatives
The Vern Riffe Building
77 South High Street
11th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Representative Joseph A. Miller III
The Ohio House of Representatives
The Vern Riffe Building
77 South High Street
10th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

RE: House Bill 139

Dear Representatives Roemer and Miller:

I am in favor of House Bill 139, or any other bill that would increase the penalty of assaulting sports officials, no matter what sport they may be involved. We need to protect people who willingly put themselves in a position where they are in the crosshairs of violence and verbal abuse.

I have been a referee of soccer nearly 50 years. I started when I was 10 years old. I have been a certified official for over 30 years with the Ohio High School Officials Association working in the Cleveland area. I am also currently an attorney of law in Ohio. I recently went on disability retirement after having served 25 years as a Prosecuting Attorney. I began my career in the City of Cleveland, prosecuting misdemeanor cases and reviewing arrests made by the police department. I worked there starting September of 1997. In 2001, I began working as a felony prosecutor with the Summit County Prosecutor's Office and worked there

makes complete sense that the sports official at that same game requires the same protection and should be included in that class of victims.

OPAA also pointed out that judges and prosecutors are not in the class like first responders or teachers, so why raise sports officials as they are not as important than they are and do not need such protection. However, what OPAA fails to consider is this. If a person is charged with assaulting a judge or prosecutor for doing their job, then it is extremely likely that same person would be charged with a violation of ORC 2921.05 Retaliation which is a felony of the 3rd degree. This is higher degree than assaulting a police officer which is only a felony of the 4th degree.

As a career prosecutor with twenty-five years of experience, I can think of no reason why this amended should be opposed. Sports officials are in a position which needs protected, and we are asking for your assistance in providing this help.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay A. Cole". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jay" being the most prominent.

Jay A. Cole