

Good afternoon Chairman Thomas, Ranking member Isaacsohn, and the members of the Judiciary committee.

My name is Tyler Marcum and I am the Assistant Principal at Chesapeake High School in Chesapeake, OH. I have also served as an Athletic Director at Chesapeake for 8 years. Notably, I have also been a licensed football official for 15+ years for the state of Ohio. Today, I bring to you a unique perspective of viewing spectator sportsmanship and unruly acts two-fold.

Although officials have always been scrutinized, the amount of scrutiny has grown exponentially with the development of technology. Fans and coaches alike have access to game footage immediately. And unfortunately, through forums and group chats, the court of public opinion has been immediately ruled before officials even have a chance to leave the premises of the school. Officials all over this state have been physically assaulted, barricaded into locker rooms, had objects thrown at them, games have even ended early due to the aggressive nature of the environment. My testimony story of exceptionally unruly parents is very long. And no one was physically hurt, thank goodness. But the verbal assaults that were spewed at us and the host school administrators were exceptionally foul. The social media attacks on myself, my crew, and my family were heinous. Why? This is just a game played by kids

As a school administrator, my tagline is always “I just need the ball to go into the air,” insinuating that all parties to put on a game have shown up and the game will be played. Even though I always ensured that officials had an escort to and from the locker rooms. I have found that sometimes that is not enough. Unlawful acts can and will be committed against officials in the parking lot while trying to leave the facility. Why? This is just a game played by kids.

I constantly reminded the students’ parents during meetings that no amount of verbal assault will change the outcome of the game. So why do parents act this way? No punishment. No penalty. This is where Ohio can set the standard in support of both school administration and its licensed officials and stiffening the penalties on unruly spectators, coaches, and players.

I do not know how the sports arena has become an exception to worldly laws. I have my theories, but I am going to need longer than my allotted 3 minutes. Treat others as you want to be treated, right? Except at sporting events. All rules, including the golden one, are out the window in athletics. High school sports...games that are played by kids...an alternative avenue for kids to excel in a school environment...are being ruined by the antics and behaviors of the lawless.

The number of licensed sports officials is dwindling at a rate that is unsustainable. And the #1 factor is spectator behavior. And why? This is just a game played by kids

Thank you.