

House File 52 - Introduced

HOUSE FILE 52
BY RINKER

A BILL FOR

1 An Act relating to civil liability of sports officials, providing
2 criminal penalties for assault of sports officials, and
3 including effective date and applicability provisions.
4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

unofficial

1 Section 1. NEW SECTION. **671B.1 Definition.**

2 "Sports official" means the same as defined in section 708.3A.

3 Sec. 2. NEW SECTION. **671B.2 Sports officials — limitation**
4 **of liability.**

5 A sports official who officiates an athletic contest at any
6 level of competition in this state shall not be liable to any
7 person in any civil action for injuries or damages claimed to
8 have arisen due to actions or inactions within the confines of
9 the athletic facility at which the athletic contest is played
10 related in any manner to the sports official's officiating
11 duties.

12 Sec. 3. NEW SECTION. **671B.3 Sports officials — liability**
13 **protection not applicable.**

14 This chapter does not apply to a sports official who causes
15 injury or damage to a person by actions or inactions that are
16 intentional, malicious, or grossly negligent.

17 Sec. 4. Section 708.3A, subsections 1, 2, 3, and 4, Code
18 2025, are amended to read as follows:

19 1. A person who commits an assault, as defined in section
20 708.1, against a peace officer, jailer, correctional staff,
21 member or employee of the board of parole, health care provider,
22 employee of the department of health and human services, employee
23 of the department of revenue, national guard member engaged in
24 national guard duty or state active duty, civilian employee of a
25 law enforcement agency, civilian employee of a fire department,
26 ~~or~~ fire fighter, whether paid or volunteer, or sports official,
27 with the knowledge that the person against whom the assault
28 is committed is a peace officer, jailer, correctional staff,
29 member or employee of the board of parole, health care provider,
30 employee of the department of health and human services, employee
31 of the department of revenue, national guard member engaged in
32 national guard duty or state active duty, civilian employee of a
33 law enforcement agency, civilian employee of a fire department,
34 ~~or~~ fire fighter, or sports official, and with the intent
35 to inflict a serious injury upon the peace officer, jailer,

1 correctional staff, member or employee of the board of parole,
2 health care provider, employee of the department of health and
3 human services, employee of the department of revenue, national
4 guard member engaged in national guard duty or state active duty,
5 civilian employee of a law enforcement agency, civilian employee
6 of a fire department, ~~or~~ fire fighter, or sports official, is
7 guilty of a class "D" felony.

8 2. A person who commits an assault, as defined in section
9 708.1, against a peace officer, jailer, correctional staff,
10 member or employee of the board of parole, health care provider,
11 employee of the department of health and human services, employee
12 of the department of revenue, national guard member engaged in
13 national guard duty or state active duty, civilian employee of a
14 law enforcement agency, civilian employee of a fire department,
15 ~~or~~ fire fighter, whether paid or volunteer, ~~who knows~~ or sports
16 official, knowing that the person against whom the assault
17 is committed is a peace officer, jailer, correctional staff,
18 member or employee of the board of parole, health care provider,
19 employee of the department of health and human services, employee
20 of the department of revenue, national guard member engaged in
21 national guard duty or state active duty, civilian employee of a
22 law enforcement agency, civilian employee of a fire department,
23 ~~or~~ fire fighter, or sports official, and who uses or displays a
24 dangerous weapon in connection with the assault, is guilty of a
25 class "D" felony.

26 3. A person who commits an assault, as defined in section
27 708.1, against a peace officer, jailer, correctional staff,
28 member or employee of the board of parole, health care provider,
29 employee of the department of health and human services, employee
30 of the department of revenue, national guard member engaged in
31 national guard duty or state active duty, civilian employee of a
32 law enforcement agency, civilian employee of a fire department,
33 ~~or~~ fire fighter, whether paid or volunteer, ~~who knows~~ or sports
34 official, knowing that the person against whom the assault
35 is committed is a peace officer, jailer, correctional staff,

1 member or employee of the board of parole, health care provider,
 2 employee of the department of health and human services, employee
 3 of the department of revenue, national guard member engaged in
 4 national guard duty or state active duty, civilian employee of a
 5 law enforcement agency, civilian employee of a fire department,
 6 ~~or~~ fire fighter, or sports official, and who causes bodily injury
 7 or mental illness, is guilty of an aggravated misdemeanor.

8 4. Any other assault, as defined in section 708.1, committed
 9 against a peace officer, jailer, correctional staff, member or
 10 employee of the board of parole, health care provider, employee
 11 of the department of health and human services, employee of the
 12 department of revenue, national guard member engaged in national
 13 guard duty or state active duty, civilian employee of a law
 14 enforcement agency, civilian employee of a fire department, ~~or~~
 15 fire fighter, whether paid or volunteer, or sports official by
 16 a person who knows that the person against whom the assault
 17 is committed is a peace officer, jailer, correctional staff,
 18 member or employee of the board of parole, health care provider,
 19 employee of the department of health and human services, employee
 20 of the department of revenue, national guard member engaged in
 21 national guard duty or state active duty, civilian employee of a
 22 law enforcement agency, civilian employee of a fire department,
 23 ~~or~~ fire fighter, or sports official is a serious misdemeanor.

24 Sec. 5. Section 708.3A, subsection 5, Code 2025, is amended
 25 by adding the following new paragraph:

26 NEW PARAGRAPH. *Oh.* "Sports official" means an individual
 27 who serves as a referee, umpire, or linesman, or in a similar
 28 capacity, at any athletic contest, and who is a member of
 29 or registered with a local, state, regional, or national
 30 organization that is engaged, in part, in providing education and
 31 training to referees, umpires, linesman, or persons in similar
 32 capacities.

33 Sec. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Act, being deemed of immediate
 34 importance, takes effect upon enactment.

35 Sec. 7. APPLICABILITY. The following apply to legal actions

1 commenced on or after the effective date of this Act, including
2 legal actions that allege actions or inactions of a sports
3 official that occurred prior to the effective date of this Act:

- 4 1. The section of this Act enacting section 671B.1.
- 5 2. The section of this Act enacting section 671B.2.
- 6 3. The section of this Act enacting section 671B.3.

7 EXPLANATION

8 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with
9 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

10 This bill provides that a sports official who officiates an
11 athletic contest at any level of competition in Iowa shall not
12 be liable to any person in any civil action for injuries or
13 damages claimed to have arisen due to actions or inactions within
14 the confines of the athletic facility at which the athletic
15 contest is played related in any manner to the sports official's
16 officiating duties. This provision does not apply to a sports
17 official who causes injury or damage to a person by actions or
18 inactions that are intentional, malicious, or grossly negligent.
19 The bill applies to legal actions commenced after the effective
20 date of the bill, including legal actions that allege actions
21 or inactions of a sports official that occurred prior to the
22 effective date of the bill.

23 The bill provides that a person who commits an assault against
24 a sports official, with the knowledge that the person against
25 whom the assault is committed is a sports official, and with
26 the intent to commit a serious injury, is guilty of a class "D"
27 felony. The bill provides that a person who commits an assault
28 against a sports official, who knows that the person against whom
29 the assault is committed is a sports official, and who uses or
30 displays a dangerous weapon in connection with the assault, is
31 guilty of a class "D" felony. The bill provides that a person
32 who commits an assault against a sports official, who knows that
33 the person against whom the assault is committed is a sports
34 official, and who causes bodily injury or mental illness, is
35 guilty of an aggravated misdemeanor. The bill provides that any

1 other assault committed against a sports official by a person who
2 knows that the person against whom the assault is committed is
3 a sports official is a serious misdemeanor. A class "D" felony
4 is punishable by confinement for no more than five years and a
5 fine of at least \$1,025 but not more than \$10,245. An aggravated
6 misdemeanor is punishable by confinement for no more than two
7 years and a fine of at least \$855 but not more than \$8,540. A
8 serious misdemeanor is punishable by confinement for no more than
9 one year and a fine of at least \$430 but not more than \$2,560.
10 The bill defines "sports official" as an individual who serves
11 as a referee, umpire, or linesman, or in a similar capacity, at
12 any athletic contest, and who is a member of or registered with a
13 local, state, regional, or national organization that is engaged,
14 in part, in providing education and training to sports officials.
15 The bill takes effect upon enactment.