

HB 2139 Sports Officials Bill 1/25/2023

Sports officials continue to decline in officiating sports in Kansas and across the country.

I don't have all the current statistics, but the number of officials is at the lost point in history.

Yes, age has partly to do with it, but out of control unsportsmanship like conduct is largely the problem with the decline in officials wanting to work. I personally have witnessed numerous incidents involving softball where parents or coaches have had to be told to leave a complex because of their abusiveness.

I have been an official for over 35 years and have witnessed more than once when law enforcement had to be called to get involved with a parent, coach, or adult player because of their behavior.

We have lost countless officials with softball in the City of Salina during the summer softball program, because of a fan or parent verbally abusing young umpires and even older umpires. We train them, they work a few games then quit because they feel they would rather mow grass than take abuse from the stands.

My youngest son officiates in Wichita, and he's encountered several situations just this year, where security had to be called because of out-of-control spectators or coaches.

I believe this bill, when enacted, will help toward curbing the situation of officials feeling they can do nothing when they are attacked and abused when just doing their job.

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