

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 842 (Senator Ready, *et al.*)
Judicial Proceedings

Criminal Law - Second Degree Assault - Sports Official

This bill specifies that the crime of misdemeanor second-degree assault includes the intentional causing of physical injury to another person by a person who knows or has reason to know that the victim is an official, an umpire, a referee, or a judge who is officiating at a sporting event. A violator is guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to imprisonment for up to 10 years and/or a fine of up to \$2,500 (the existing penalty for misdemeanor second-degree assault). The bill authorizes a police officer to arrest a person without a warrant if the officer has probable cause to believe that the person has committed second-degree assault against a sports official, as established under the bill.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not anticipated to materially affect State finances or operations.

Local Effect: The bill is not anticipated to materially affect local government finances or operations.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: A person may not commit an assault. However, the penalties for an assault vary depending on the assailant's conduct and the circumstances involved.

Misdemeanor Second-degree Assault

In general, a person who commits an assault is guilty of misdemeanor second-degree assault and on conviction is subject to imprisonment for up to 10 years and/or a maximum

fine of \$2,500. Assault means the crimes of assault, battery, and assault and battery, which are defined through case law.

Felony Second-degree Assault

A person commits a felony second-degree assault if the person intentionally causes physical injury to another person and has reason to know that the other person is (1) a law enforcement officer or a parole or probation agent engaged in the performance of their official duties or (2) a firefighter, an emergency medical technician, a rescue squad member, or any other first responder engaged in providing emergency medical care or rescue services. “Physical injury” means any impairment of physical condition, excluding minor injuries. A violator is subject to imprisonment for up to 10 years and/or a maximum fine of \$5,000.

First-degree Assault

A person commits a first-degree assault if the person (1) intentionally causes or attempts to cause serious physical injury to another person; (2) commits an assault with a firearm, as specified; or (3) intentionally strangles another. A violator is guilty of a felony and subject to imprisonment for up to 25 years.

“Serious physical injury” means physical injury that (1) creates a substantial risk of death or (2) causes permanent or protracted serious disfigurement, loss of the function of any bodily member or organ, or impairment of the function of any bodily member or organ. “Strangling” is defined as impeding the normal breathing or blood circulation of another person by applying pressure to the other person’s throat or neck.

Warrantless Arrests

Generally, for a police officer to be authorized to make an arrest, a judge or District Court commissioner must first issue a warrant based on a finding of probable cause. A law enforcement officer may, however, make a warrantless arrest when (1) a person commits or attempts to commit a felony or misdemeanor in the officer’s presence or within view of the officer; (2) the officer has probable cause to believe that a felony or misdemeanor is being committed in the presence or within the view of the police officer; (3) the officer has probable cause to believe that a person has committed or attempted to commit a felony, whether or not in the presence or within the view of the police officer; or (4) the officer has probable cause to believe that the person has committed one of a limited number of offenses specified in statute and that unless the person is arrested immediately, the person may not be apprehended, may cause physical harm or property damage, or may tamper with, dispose of, or destroy evidence.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See SB 28 and HB 688 of 2021.

Designated Cross File: HB 1469 (Delegates Schmidt and Simmons) - Rules and Executive Nominations.

Information Source(s): Baltimore City; Kent, Montgomery, Washington, and Worcester counties; towns of Bel Air and Leonardtown; Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Office of the Public Defender; Maryland State's Attorneys' Association; Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Department of State Police; Department of Legislative Services

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