
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2079

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2024 Regular Session

By House Community Safety, Justice, & Reentry (originally sponsored by Representatives Schmidt, Riccelli, Low, Christian, Klicker, Ormsby, McClintock, and Couture)

READ FIRST TIME 01/31/24.

1 AN ACT Relating to improving school safety by extending and
2 increasing penalties for interference by, or intimidation by threat
3 of, force or violence at schools and athletic activities; amending
4 RCW 28A.635.090 and 28A.635.100; creating a new section; and
5 prescribing penalties.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that incidents
8 of violence in elementary and secondary schools raise concerns about
9 ensuring and promoting school safety. For learning to occur, schools
10 must first be safe places for students and staff. The legislature
11 recognizes that violent behavior tends to escalate if tolerated, thus
12 it is the intent of the legislature to provide targeted and
13 appropriate sanctions for the interference with school activities by
14 force or violence before it rises to the level of substantial or
15 grievous bodily harm.

16 (2) The legislature understands that extracurricular athletics
17 provide valuable opportunities for students to develop social and
18 personal skills that can be useful throughout their lives. These
19 activities also benefit other students and spectators by building
20 school spirit, unity, community support, and community identity.
21 Extracurricular athletics would not be possible without the

1 commitment of officials, judges, referees, and volunteers who work at
2 the events for little or no financial gain. The legislature finds
3 that the values engendered in interscholastic activities are being
4 undermined by participants and spectators who do not respect the
5 commitment of these officials. Increasingly, these people are
6 expressing their dissatisfaction through inappropriate verbal abuse
7 and behavior directed at the officials. The legislature recognizes
8 that officials, such as judges and referees, and volunteers acting as
9 officials, for extracurricular athletic activities of elementary and
10 secondary school students are particularly vulnerable to
11 inappropriate conduct because their attention is focused on the
12 athletic activities. Thus, the legislature intends to provide
13 additional support and protection for officials conducting
14 interscholastic events.

15 (3) The legislature finds that violence against public and
16 private students and staff is unacceptable. Thus, to promote a safe
17 learning environment, the legislature intends to increase the penalty
18 for those perpetrating violence against students and school staff.

19 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.635.090 and 2003 c 53 s 169 are each amended to
20 read as follows:

21 (1) It (~~shall be~~) is unlawful for any person, singly or in
22 concert with others, to interfere by force or violence with (~~any~~
23 ~~administrator, teacher, classified employee, person under contract~~
24 ~~with the school or school district, or student of any common school~~
25 ~~who~~) an employee or contractor of a public or private elementary or
26 secondary school, an elementary or secondary student, or an official,
27 or volunteer acting as an official, for extracurricular athletic
28 activities of elementary or secondary students, while that person is
29 in the peaceful discharge or conduct of his or her duties or studies.
30 (~~Any such interference by force or violence committed by a student~~
31 ~~shall be grounds for immediate suspension or expulsion of the~~
32 ~~student.~~)

33 (2) If a public school student interferes as described in
34 subsection (1) of this section, the interference is grounds for the
35 student's emergency removal, subject to RCW 28A.600.015. If a public
36 school student interferes as described in subsection (1) of this
37 section during extracurricular athletic activities, the student may
38 be excluded from participating in or attending that activity for up
39 to 12 months.

1 (3) A person violating this section is guilty of a gross
2 misdemeanor and shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars, or
3 imprisoned in jail not more than six months, or both such fine and
4 imprisonment. Upon conviction, a person, other than a student, must
5 be excluded from entering the school where the crime was committed or
6 from attending the extracurricular athletic activities in which the
7 crime was committed, for a period of up to 12 months.

8 (4) As used in this section, "public school" has the same meaning
9 as in RCW 28A.150.010.

10 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28A.635.100 and 2003 c 53 s 170 are each amended to
11 read as follows:

12 (1) It (~~shall be~~) is unlawful for any person, singly or in
13 concert with others, to intimidate by threat of force or violence
14 (~~any administrator, teacher, classified employee, or student of any~~
15 ~~common school whe~~) an employee or contractor of a public or private
16 elementary or secondary school, an elementary or secondary student,
17 or an official, or volunteer acting as an official, for
18 extracurricular athletic activities of elementary or secondary
19 students, while that person is in the peaceful discharge or conduct
20 of his or her duties or studies.

21 (2) A person violating this section is guilty of a gross
22 misdemeanor and shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars, or
23 imprisoned in jail not more than six months, or both such fine and
24 imprisonment.

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