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1 HB103
2 9JJK8BP-1
3 By Representative Hulsey
4 RFD: Children and Senior Advocacy
5 First Read: 13-Jan-26
6 PFD: 06-Jan-26



4 SYNOPSIS:

5 This bill is the Youth Athlete Protection Act.

6 This bill would require the State Department of
7 Human Resources (DHR) to develop a model Youth Athlete
8 Protection Policy to: (i) prevent the abuse of youth
9 athletes; (ii) set standards for appropriate conduct
10 between coaches and youth athletes; and (iii) provide
11 mandatory reporter training for coaches of youth
12 sports.

13 This bill would authorize DHR to rely on
14 national resources, such as the U.S. Center for
15 SafeSport, when developing the model policy.

16 This bill would require each youth sports
17 organization and each local government which provides
18 individuals under 18 years of age the opportunity to
19 participate in youth sports to: (i) adopt a Youth
20 Athlete Protection Policy, which must reflect the
21 minimum standards of DHR's model policy; (ii) require
22 coaches, including volunteers, to undergo a criminal
23 history background check; and (iii) require coaches,
24 including volunteers, to annually complete mandatory
25 reporter training.

26 This bill would require youth sports
27 organizations and local governments to annually
28 register with DHR to certify compliance with this act,



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and would require DHR to publish a list of certified youth sports organizations and local governments. If a youth sports organization or local government does not certify compliance, this bill would prohibit the entity from providing youth sports.

This bill would provide immunity to youth sports organizations and local governments relating to the hiring of a coach or acceptance of a coach as a volunteer, with exceptions.

This bill would also require DHR to adopt rules.

A BILL

TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

Relating to youth sports organizations; to establish the Youth Athlete Protection Act; to require the State Department of Human Resources (DHR) to develop a model Youth Athlete Protection Policy and mandatory reporter training for youth sports coaches; to provide standards for the policy and training relating to the prevention of child abuse; to require youth sports organizations and local governments that offer youth sports to implement a Youth Athlete Protection Policy; to require coaches, including volunteers, to undergo a criminal history background check and annual mandatory reporter training to be eligible to act as a youth sports



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coach; to require youth sports organizations and certain local governments to certify compliance with this act with DHR, without which the entity is prohibited from offering youth sports; and to require DHR to adopt rules.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the Youth Athlete Protection Act.

Section 2. For the purposes of this act, the following terms have the following meanings:

(1) CHILD ABUSE. Physical abuse, sexual abuse or exploitation, negligent treatment, or mental or emotional abuse of an individual under 18 years of age.

(2) COACH. An individual employed or volunteering as a coach, manager, or supervisor of a youth athletic activity. The term does not include:

a. Any individual who occasionally assists with or supports a youth athletic activity; or

b. Any employee or volunteer of a youth sports organization that provides passing, general, or nominal assistance with or support of a youth athletic activity.

(3) DEPARTMENT. The State Department of Human Resources.

(4) LOCAL GOVERNMENT. A city, county, or other local government that provides youth athletes the opportunity to participate in scheduled competitive or recreational sporting activities, whether individually or as a team.

(5) YOUTH ATHLETE. An individual under 18 years of age participating in a youth sports organization.



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(6) YOUTH SPORTS ORGANIZATION. Any organization that, as part of its core function, provides youth athletes the opportunity to participate in scheduled competitive or recreational sporting activities, whether individually or as a team. The term does not include any of the following:

a. An organization that only offers sporting activities incidental to a nonathletic program or lesson.

b. A public or private preK-12 school.

c. A licensed child-care facility, as defined in Section 38-7-2, Code of Alabama 1975.

d. A public or private institution of higher education.

e. An organization that offers recreational sporting activities only by providing the opportunity to participate in unsupervised, unscheduled competitive or recreational sporting events on a walk-in basis.

Section 3. (a) No later than January 1, 2027, the department shall adopt and publish a model Youth Athlete Protection Policy. The department shall consider national standards relating to the prevention of child abuse, such as those developed by the U.S. Center for SafeSport, when developing the model policy. The model policy shall include, but not be limited to, each of the following:

(1) Standards for prohibited conduct in youth sports. The policy shall include a list of prohibited conduct by parents, spectators, coaches, and youth athletes to prevent the abuse of youth athletes. Prohibited conduct shall include, but not be limited to, sexual abuse or misconduct, physical abuse or misconduct, emotional abuse or misconduct, bullying,



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harassment, hazing, grooming behaviors, and any other behaviors that risk the safety of youth athletes.

(2) A code of conduct for parents, spectators, coaches, and youth athletes to follow. The code of conduct shall include appropriate one-on-one interactions between players and coaches and shall address topics including, but not limited to, appropriate use of electronic communications between adults and youth athletes, travel supervision policies, and appropriate use of locker rooms and restrooms.

(3) A mandatory reporting policy for adults who have knowledge of an act of prohibited conduct.

(b)(1) The department shall require each youth sports organization and local government to annually certify compliance with this act. The annual certification shall include: (i) confirmation that the youth sports organization or local government has a Youth Athlete Protection Policy that complies with this act; and (ii) verification that each coach has satisfactorily completed a criminal history background check, completed mandatory reporter training, and been provided a copy of the relevant Youth Athlete Protection Policy. The department shall publish a list of all certified youth sports organizations and local governments on the department's website.

(2) A youth sports organization or local government that is found to be out of compliance with the requirements of this act shall immediately suspend the provision of youth athletic activities until the entity provides documentation to the department which verifies the entity has come into



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141 compliance.

142 (c) The department shall develop a mandatory reporter
143 training program for coaches. The mandatory reporter training
144 shall include, but not be limited to, explanations of: (i) who
145 is a mandatory reporter and circumstances that must be
146 reported; (ii) the responsibilities of coaches as it relates
147 to the reporting of suspected child abuse; (iii) how to
148 respond to disclosures of child abuse or reports of behavior
149 that violate the prohibited conduct policy in a supportive and
150 appropriate manner that meets the mandatory reporting
151 requirements pursuant to state law; and (iv) child abuse
152 prevention strategies. In developing the mandatory reporter
153 training program, the department may use resources from
154 relevant national groups, such as the U.S. Center for
155 SafeSport.

156 (d) The department shall adopt rules to implement and
157 administer this act.

158 Section 4. (a) (1) No later than January 1, 2027, each
159 youth sports organization shall adopt a Youth Athlete
160 Protection Policy including, but not limited to: (i) standards
161 for prohibited conduct in youth sports; (ii) a code of conduct
162 for parents, spectators, coaches, and youth athletes; and
163 (iii) a mandatory reporting policy. The policy, at a minimum,
164 shall reflect the model policy developed by the department in
165 Section 3. Each youth sports organization shall provide a copy
166 of the Youth Athlete Protection Policy to all coaches employed
167 by or volunteering for the organization and parents of youth
168 athletes participating in a sport offered by that



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organization.

(2) Each youth sports organization shall require each of its coaches to: (i) comply with the organization's prohibited conduct policy; and (ii) annually complete mandatory reporter training, as provided in Section 3.

(b) (1) a. Each youth sports organization shall require each coach to obtain, prior to his or her employment or acceptance as a volunteer, a criminal history background check from the Alabama State Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA). ALEA may provide the results of the criminal history background check to the youth sports organization where the coach is seeking to be employed or volunteer. The youth sports organization may use the criminal history background check only for purposes of making hiring or volunteer decisions, and the results of the criminal history background check are otherwise confidential.

b. Youth sports organizations may rely on the results of a criminal history background check when making hiring and volunteer decisions. Youth sports organizations are immune from any civil liability relating to the hiring of a coach or acceptance of a coach as a volunteer, except where the youth sports organization: (i) knows the information relating to the coach's criminal history background check is false; or (ii) acts with reckless disregard concerning the veracity of that information.

(2) No youth sports organization may hire or accept as a volunteer a coach if a criminal history background check performed on that individual shows that he or she has been convicted of, pled nolo contendere to, or has received a



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deferred sentence or deferred prosecution for:

a. Any felony under Chapter 15 of Title 26, Code of Alabama 1975;

b. Any sex offense under Section 15-20A-5, Code of Alabama 1975;

c. Any felony assault or sexual offense under Title 13A, Code of Alabama 1975, in which the victim is an individual under 18 years of age or older, or any other offense involving child abuse; or

d. Any comparable offense provided in this subsection which was committed in any other state.

Section 5. (a)(1) No later than January 1, 2027, each local government shall adopt a Youth Athlete Protection Policy including, but not limited to: (i) standards for prohibited conduct in youth sports; (ii) a code of conduct for parents, spectators, coaches, and youth athletes; and (iii) a mandatory reporting policy. The policy, at a minimum, shall reflect the model policy developed by the department in Section 3. Each local government shall provide a copy of the Youth Athlete Protection Policy to all coaches employed by or volunteering for the local government and parents of youth athletes participating in a sport offered by that local government.

(2) Each local government shall require each of its coaches to: (i) comply with the local government's prohibited conduct policy; and (ii) annually complete mandatory reporter training, as provided in Section 3.

(b)(1)a. Each local government shall require each coach to obtain, prior to his or her employment or acceptance as a



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volunteer, a criminal history background check from the Alabama State Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA). ALEA may provide the results of the criminal history background check to the local government where the coach is seeking to be employed or volunteer. The local government may use the criminal history background check only for purposes of making hiring or volunteer decisions, and the results of the criminal history background check are otherwise confidential.

b. Local governments may rely on the results of a criminal history background check when making hiring and volunteer decisions. Local governments are immune from any civil liability relating to the hiring of a coach or acceptance of a coach as a volunteer, except where the local government: (i) knows the information relating to the coach's criminal history background check is false; or (ii) acts with reckless disregard concerning the veracity of that information.

(2) No local government may hire or accept as a volunteer a coach if a criminal history background check performed on that individual shows that he or she has been convicted of, pled nolo contendere to, or has received a deferred sentence or deferred prosecution for:

a. Any felony under Chapter 15 of Title 26, Code of Alabama 1975;

b. Any sex offense under Section 15-20A-5, Code of Alabama 1975;

c. Any felony assault or sexual offense under Title 13A, Code of Alabama 1975, in which the victim is an



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253 individual under 18 years of age or older, or any other
254 offense involving child abuse; or
255 d. Any comparable offense provided in this subsection
256 which was committed in any other state.
257 Section 6. This act shall become effective on October
258 1, 2026.