

HB456 INTRODUCED



1 HB456
2 5V8NT66-1
3 By Representative Hulsey
4 RFD: Children and Senior Advocacy
5 First Read: 17-Feb-26



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SYNOPSIS:

This bill would create the Youth Athlete Protection Act.

This bill would require each local government that provides an opportunity for youth athletes to participate in organized sports to develop a Youth Athlete Protection Policy to prevent the abuse of youth athletes, set standards for appropriate conduct between coaches and youth athletes, and educate parents and coaches about mandatory reporter laws.

This bill would require each local government to require coaches who are employees of or volunteers of the local government to comply with the Youth Athlete Protection Policy and undergo a criminal history background check.

This bill would authorize a criminal history background check to be conducted by the Alabama State Law Enforcement Agency or a consumer reporting agency accredited by the Professional Background Screening Association.

This bill would require local governments to conduct a search of the State Department of Education's Teacher Education and Certification web portal for any prospective coach who is, or has ever been, employed by a local board of education or the State Board of



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29 Education.

30 This bill would require each coach to annually
31 renew his or her criminal history background check.

32 This bill would also provide immunity to local
33 governments relating to the hiring of a coach or
34 acceptance of a coach as a volunteer, with exceptions.

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38 A BILL

39 TO BE ENTITLED

40 AN ACT

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42 Relating to local youth sports organizations; require
43 certain local governments to develop a Youth Athlete
44 Protection Policy for youth sports coaches; to provide
45 standards for the policy and training relating to the
46 prevention of child abuse; to require coaches employed by or
47 volunteering for a local government to undergo an annual
48 criminal history background check; and to limit liability for
49 local governments.

50 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

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

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

55 (1) CHILD ABUSE. Physical abuse, sexual abuse or
56 exploitation, negligent treatment, or mental or emotional



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57 abuse of an individual under 18 years of age.

58 (2) COACH. An individual employed by or volunteering
59 for a local government as a coach, manager, or supervisor of a
60 youth athletic activity. The term does not include:

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

63 b. Any employee or volunteer of a local government who
64 provides passing, general, or nominal assistance with or
65 support of a youth athletic activity.

66 (3) LOCAL GOVERNMENT. A city, county, or other local
67 government that operates a program to provide youth athletes
68 the opportunity to participate in organized, scheduled
69 competitive or recreational sporting activities. The term does
70 not include any local government that has only incidental
71 involvement with a youth athletic activity, such as through
72 the provision of a playing field or activity space.

73 (4) YOUTH ATHLETE. An individual under 18 years of age
74 participating in a youth sporting activity.

75 Section 3. (a) No later than January 1, 2027, each
76 local government shall adopt a Youth Athlete Protection
77 Policy. Local governments may consider national standards
78 relating to the prevention of child abuse, such as those
79 developed by the U.S. Center for SafeSport, when developing
80 the policy. The policy shall include, but not be limited to,
81 the following:

82 (1) Standards for prohibited conduct in youth sports.
83 The policy shall include a list of prohibited conduct by
84 parents, spectators, coaches, and youth athletes to prevent



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85 the abuse of youth athletes. Prohibited conduct shall include,
86 but not be limited to, sexual abuse or misconduct, physical
87 abuse or misconduct, emotional abuse or misconduct, bullying,
88 harassment, hazing, grooming behaviors, and any other
89 behaviors that risk the safety of youth athletes.

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

97 (3) A mandatory reporting policy for adults who have
98 knowledge of an act of prohibited conduct. The policy shall
99 describe who is a mandatory reporter under state law, the
100 circumstances that must be reported, and the responsibilities
101 of coaches as it relates to the reporting of suspected child
102 abuse.

103 (b) Each local government shall:

104 (1) Provide a copy of the Youth Athlete Protection
105 Policy to all coaches employed by or volunteering for the
106 local government and parents of youth athletes participating
107 in a sport offered by that local government; and

108 (2) Require each coach employed by or volunteering for
109 the local government to comply with the local government's
110 Youth Athlete Protection Policy established pursuant to
111 subsection (a) and the criminal history background check
112 requirement provided in Section 4.



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113 (3) If the prospective coach is, or has ever been,
114 employed by a local board of education or the State Board of
115 Education, conduct a search for the prospective coach in the
116 State Department of Education's Teacher Education and
117 Certification web portal. The local government may rely on any
118 information obtained as a result of the search when making
119 hiring or volunteer decisions, as provided in Section 4(c).

120 Section 4. (a) Each local government shall require each
121 coach to obtain, prior to his or her employment or acceptance
122 as a volunteer, a criminal history background check through
123 either of the following:

124 (1) The Alabama State Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA),
125 which shall be a statewide check including fingerprints. ALEA
126 may provide the results of the criminal history background
127 check directly to the local government where the coach is
128 seeking to be employed or volunteer. The local government may
129 use the criminal history background check only for purposes of
130 making hiring or volunteer decisions, and the results of the
131 criminal history background check are otherwise confidential.

132 (2) A consumer reporting agency accredited by the
133 Professional Background Screening Association (PBSA), which
134 shall include an expanded criminal history check. If this type
135 is used, local governments shall obtain the expanded criminal
136 history background check, provided the local government
137 obtained the prospective coach's written consent to obtain the
138 check. The expanded criminal history check must include, at a
139 minimum, all of the following:

140 a. Collection of the applicant's identifying



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141 information from a valid government-issued identification.

142 b. A search to identify all names and aliases
143 associated with the applicant.

144 c. The following searches, using all identified legal
145 names and aliases of the applicant:

146 1. Publicly available Alabama statewide court records
147 through the Alacourt ACCESS system.

148 2. Criminal records maintained by all counties or
149 similar governmental units in any other state in which the
150 applicant has resided.

151 3. United States District Court records from the
152 districts in which the applicant has resided.

153 4. Sex offender registries in every state, or the
154 national sex offender registry maintained by the United States
155 Department of Justice.

156 5. A multistate criminal database search.

157 (b) (1) ALEA or the criminal reporting agency may
158 provide the results of the criminal history background check
159 directly to the local government where the coach is seeking to
160 be employed or volunteer. Results of any criminal history
161 background check conducted pursuant to this act may only be
162 used for the purposes described in this act and are otherwise
163 confidential and may not be shared with a separate entity for
164 any reason.

165 (2) Use of criminal history background check
166 information conducted by ALEA is subject to all state and
167 federal laws and the rules adopted by the Alabama Justice
168 Information Commission for the use, dissemination, and



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169 maintenance of such information, including any sanctions which
170 may be imposed by those laws or rules relating to improper use
171 of criminal history background check information.

172 (c) Local governments may rely on the results of a
173 criminal history background check and the State Department of
174 Education's Teacher Education and Certification search when
175 making hiring and volunteer decisions. Local governments are
176 immune from any civil liability relating to the hiring of a
177 coach or acceptance of a coach as a volunteer, except where
178 the local government fails to exercise reasonable care in
179 reviewing and relying upon information in the criminal history
180 background check or the State Department of Education's
181 Teacher Education and Certification search.

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

187 (1) Any felony under Chapter 15 of Title 26, Code of
188 Alabama 1975;

189 (2) Any sex offense under Section 15-20A-5, Code of
190 Alabama 1975;

191 (3) Any felony assault or sexual offense under Title
192 13A, Code of Alabama 1975, or any other offense involving
193 child abuse; or

194 (4) Any comparable offense provided in this subsection
195 which was committed in any other state.

196 (e) Each coach shall annually renew the criminal



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197 history background check required by subsection (a), not later
198 than 30 days after the prior year's criminal history
199 background check expires.

200 (f) (1) Each local government shall:

201 a. Determine whether renewals may be obtained using a
202 different method as the initial criminal history background
203 check;

204 b. Prohibit any coach who has failed to timely renew
205 his or her criminal history background check from continuing
206 in their role until the renewal is completed; and

207 c. Maintain records of each coach's compliance with
208 this section.

209 (2) Each local government may:

210 a. Determine whether the cost of obtaining the criminal
211 history background check shall be the responsibility of the
212 coach or prospective coach or the local government; and

213 b. Authorize a third party acting on behalf of a coach
214 or prospective coach to pay for any criminal history
215 background check.

216 (3) Nothing in this act may be construed to waive any
217 the background check fee assessed by ALEA.

218 Section 5. This act shall become effective on October
219 1, 2026.