

1 H.660

2 Introduced by Representative Peterson of Clarendon

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Education; interscholastic athletics

6 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to allow public
7 and approved independent schools to participate in an association or an athletic
8 event conducted, organized, sanctioned, or sponsored by an association that
9 organizes interscholastic high school sports if the association does not
10 permanently ban or otherwise restrict any member schools or participating
11 schools from participating in interscholastic athletic events sponsored by the
12 association due to the school's forfeiture in sponsored games or tournaments.

13 The bill also proposes to create the Vermont Interscholastic Sports Study
14 Committee and the Vermont Youth Sports Leagues Study Committee to study
15 and make recommendations on the regulation of and provision of school,
16 municipal, and private sports programs in Vermont.

17 An act relating to youth sports in Vermont

18 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

19 * * * Participation in Interscholastic Sports Associations * * *

20 Sec. 1. YOUTH SPORTS PARTICIPATION; FINDINGS

1 The General Assembly finds that the permanent banning of a school from
2 future participation in athletics due to a rules violation is detrimental to the
3 growth and education of the student athletes and is anathema to the goals of
4 student participation in activities.

5 Sec. 2. 16 V.S.A. chapter 1, subchapter 4 is added to read:

6 Subchapter 4. Vermont School Sports

7 § 101. ATHLETICS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND APPROVED

8 INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

9 (a) As used in this subchapter, “association” means an organization that
10 conducts, organizes, sanctions, or sponsors interscholastic high school athletic
11 events as one of the organization’s primary purposes.

12 (b) A public school or approved independent school may participate in an
13 association or an athletic event conducted, organized, sanctioned, or sponsored
14 by an association, provided that the association complies with the provisions of
15 this subchapter.

16 § 102. RIGHT TO FORFEIT

17 An association shall not permanently ban or otherwise restrict any member
18 schools or participating schools from participating in interscholastic athletic
19 events sponsored by the association due to the school’s forfeiture in sponsored
20 games or tournaments.

1 * * * Study of Youth Sports Regulation * * *

2 Sec. 3. YOUTH SPORTS AND SPORTS LEAGUES; FINDINGS

3 The General Assembly finds:

4 (1) Many youth sports programs throughout Vermont are designed,
5 administered, and coached by volunteers, especially in rural areas.

6 (2) Most volunteers are parents of participants who leave the program
7 when their child is no longer involved.

8 (3) This can lead to inconsistency in program quality, which can lead to
9 poor participation, frustration for those who do not participate, and a high
10 percentage of athletes who do not continue playing at the next level in a given
11 sport.

12 (4) There is a need to ensure that all parts of the State have well-run
13 programs that provide a good athletic experience for all participants, which
14 will help keep youths involved in positive activities and lead to better physical
15 and mental health.

16 Sec. 4. VERMONT INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS STUDY COMMITTEE;
17 REPORT

18 (a) Creation. There is created the Vermont Interscholastic Sports Study
19 Committee to study the oversight of high school athletics in Vermont and
20 propose alternative models of delivery and oversight.

1 (b) Membership. The Committee shall be composed of the following
2 members and, to the extent possible, include members from all 14 counties in
3 the State:

4 (1) the Executive Director of the Vermont Principals' Association or
5 designee;

6 (2) three athletic directors from Division 1 or 2 high school programs,
7 all from different counties, appointed by the Secretary of Education;

8 (3) three athletic directors from Division 3 or 4 high school programs,
9 all from different counties, appointed by the Secretary of Education;

10 (4) two coaches of women's sports teams from Division 1 or 2 high
11 school programs of varied sports and seasons, each from a different county,
12 appointed by the Secretary of Education;

13 (5) two coaches of men's sports teams from Division 1 or 2 high school
14 programs of varied sports and seasons, each from a different county, appointed
15 by the Secretary of Education;

16 (6) two coaches of women's sports teams from Division 3 or 4 high
17 school sports programs of varied sports and seasons, each from a different
18 county, appointed by the Secretary of Education; and

19 (7) two coaches of men's sports teams from Division 3 or 4 high school
20 sports programs of varied sports and seasons, each from a different county,
21 appointed by the Secretary of Education.

1 (c) Powers and duties. The Committee shall study the oversight of high
2 school athletics in Vermont and shall consider and make recommendations on
3 the following:

4 (1) the establishment of standards for what a successful high school
5 sports team shall include;

6 (2) how best to monitor high school sports programs throughout
7 Vermont to ensure all programs are providing a great experience for athletes;

8 (3) how best to work with school athletic directors and coaches to help
9 improve sports programs that have low participation numbers and are not
10 competitive in games;

11 (4) the establishment of coaching standards for all sports to ensure that
12 all coaching staff is engaged with athletes in and out of season in order to
13 improve skills and conditioning; and

14 (5) guidelines and policy changes regarding the regulation of high
15 school athletics in Vermont.

16 (d) Assistance. The Committee shall have the administrative, technical,
17 and legal assistance of the Agency of Education.

18 (e) Report. On or before January 15, 2025, the Committee shall submit a
19 written report to the House and Senate Committees on Education with its
20 findings and any recommendations for legislative action. The report shall also

1 include any recommendations for the Agency of Education's role in the
2 regulation of high school athletics.

3 (f) Meetings.

4 (1) The Executive Director of the Vermont Principals' Association or
5 designee shall call the first meeting of the Committee to occur on or before
6 July 1, 2024.

7 (2) The Executive Director of the Vermont Principals' Association or
8 designee shall be the Committee chair.

9 (3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

10 (4) The Committee shall cease to exist on July 1, 2025 as a study
11 committee and may be reconstituted as a council pursuant to further legislative
12 action.

13 (g) Reimbursement. Members of the Committee who are not employees of
14 the State of Vermont and who are not otherwise reimbursed for their
15 attendance shall be entitled to reimbursement of expenses as permitted under
16 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than 10 meetings. These payments shall be
17 made from monies appropriated to the Agency of Education.

18 (h) Appropriation. The sum of \$1,250.00 is appropriated to the Agency of
19 Education from the General Fund in fiscal year 2025 for per diem
20 compensation and reimbursement of expenses for members of the Committee.

1 Sec. 5. VERMONT YOUTH SPORTS LEAGUES STUDY COMMITTEE;
2 REPORT

3 (a) Creation. There is created the Vermont Youth Sports Leagues Study
4 Committee to collect data on youth sports programs that are privately or
5 municipally operated and funded.

6 (b) Membership. The Committee shall be composed of the following
7 members and, to the extent possible, include members from all 14 counties in
8 the State:

9 (1) the Executive Director of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns
10 or designee;

11 (2) seven town or city recreation directors from municipalities with
12 youth athletic programs, appointed by the Secretary of Education; and

13 (3) seven volunteer coaches from various youth sports, all from different
14 counties not represented by the recreation directors appointed under
15 subdivision (2) of this subsection, appointed by the Secretary of Education.

16 (c) Powers and duties. The Committee shall study privately and
17 municipally operated and funded youth sports programs and shall take the
18 following actions:

19 (1) collect data from each Vermont municipality that offers sports
20 programming for kindergarten through grade eight, or the corresponding age

1 levels, including information on whether the program is operated by a
2 municipality, school, or private organization;

3 (2) produce a report that shows athletic offerings at each grade and age
4 level and information on how each program is administered for each town
5 within the State; and

6 (3) make recommendations for youth programs that include the
7 following issues:

8 (A) administration;

9 (B) team coaching and training;

10 (C) fields and facilities;

11 (D) athletic equipment;

12 (E) league associations;

13 (F) game schedule; and

14 (G) any other factors that might affect program quality to ensure that
15 children have access to well-run athletic programs.

16 (d) Assistance. The Committee shall have the administrative, technical,
17 and legal assistance of the Agency of Education.

18 (e) Report. On or before January 15, 2025, the Committee shall submit a
19 written report to the House and Senate Committees on Education with its
20 findings and the information required under subsection (c) of this section,
21 including any recommendations for legislative action.

