

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/HB 319 — Interference With Sporting or Entertainment Events

by Criminal Justice Subcommittee and Rep. Yarkosky and others (CS/SB 764 by Criminal Justice Committee and Senator Simon)

The bill creates s. 871.05, F.S., to prohibit certain conduct at a sporting or entertainment event. The bill defines:

- “Covered event” to mean an athletic competition or practice, including one conducted in a public venue or a live artistic, theatrical, or other entertainment performance event. The duration of such event includes the period from the time when a venue is held open to the public for such an event until the end of the athletic competition or performance event.
- “Covered participant” to mean an umpire, officiating crewmember, player, coach, manager, groundskeeper, or any artistic, theatrical, or other performer or sanctioned participant in the covered event. The term includes event operations and security employees working at a covered event.
- “Restricted area” to mean any area designated for use by players, coaches, officials, performers, or other personnel administering a covered event that is on, or adjacent to, the area or performance.

Specifically, a person may not:

- Intentionally touch or strike a covered participant during a covered event against the will of the covered participant, or intentionally cause bodily harm to a covered participant during a covered event; or
- Willfully enter or remain in a restricted area during a covered event without being authorized, licensed, or invited to enter or remain in such a restricted area.

A person who violates this section commits a first degree misdemeanor, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, F.S., or by a fine of not more than \$2,500.

A person who solicits another person to violate this section by offering money or any other thing of value to another to engage in specific conduct that constitutes such a violation, commits a third degree felony.

A person convicted of a violation of this section may not realize any profit or benefit, directly or indirectly, from committing such a violation. Any profit or benefit payable to or accruing to a person convicted of a violation of this section is subject to seizure and forfeiture as provided in the Florida Contraband Forfeiture Act.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor’s signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2023.

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 109-3.