
HOUSE BILL 2078

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2024 Regular Session

By Representatives Schmidt, Riccelli, Low, Christian, Klicker, Reed, Ormsby, Ybarra, Cheney, and McClintock

Prefiled 01/02/24. Read first time 01/08/24. Referred to Committee on Community Safety, Justice, & Reentry.

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 school-related athletic
4 activities; amending RCW 28B.10.570 and 28B.10.571; creating a new
5 section; and 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 at institutions of higher education raise concerns about
9 ensuring and promoting the safety of staff and students. For learning
10 to occur, institutions must first be safe places for students,
11 faculty, and other institutional employees. The legislature
12 recognizes that violent behavior tends to escalate if tolerated, thus
13 it is the intent of the legislature to provide targeted and
14 appropriate sanctions for the interference with institutional
15 activities by force or violence before it rises to the level of
16 substantial or grievous bodily harm.

17 (2) The legislature further finds that athletic activities
18 provide valuable opportunities for participants to develop social and
19 personal skills that can be useful throughout their lives. These
20 activities also benefit other students and spectators by building
21 school spirit, unity, and community support and identity. Athletic

1 activities would not be possible without the commitment of officials,
2 judges, referees, and volunteers who work at the events for little or
3 no financial gain. The legislature finds that the values engendered
4 in athletic activities are being undermined by participants and
5 spectators who do not respect the commitment of these officials.
6 Increasingly, these people are expressing their dissatisfaction
7 through inappropriate verbal abuse and behavior directed at the
8 officials. The legislature recognizes that officials, judges,
9 referees, and volunteers at athletic events are particularly
10 vulnerable to inappropriate conduct because their attention is
11 focused on the conduct of the events. Thus, the legislature intends
12 to provide additional support and protection for officials conducting
13 athletic events.

14 (3) The legislature finds that violence against staff at
15 institutions of higher education is unacceptable. Thus, to promote a
16 safe learning environment, the legislature intends to increase the
17 penalty for those perpetrating violence against students and staff at
18 institutions of higher education.

19 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28B.10.570 and 2015 c 55 s 203 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, faculty member, or student of any university, college,~~
24 ~~or community or technical college who~~) an employee, contractor, or
25 student of any institution of higher education, or an official, or
26 volunteer acting as an official, for athletic activities of any
27 institution of higher education, while that person is in the peaceful
28 discharge or conduct of his or her duties or studies.

29 (2) A person violating this section is guilty of a (~~gross~~
30 ~~misdemeanor and shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars, or~~
31 ~~imprisoned in jail not more than six months, or both such fine and~~
32 ~~imprisonment~~) class C felony punishable under chapter 9A.20 RCW.
33 Upon conviction, a person must be excluded from entering the
34 institution of higher education where the crime was committed or from
35 attending the athletic activities in which the crime was committed,
36 for a period of up to 12 months.

37 (3) As used in this section, "institution of higher education"
38 has the same meaning as in RCW 28B.92.030.

1 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28B.10.571 and 2015 c 55 s 204 are each amended to
2 read as follows:

3 (1) It (~~shall be~~) is unlawful for any person, singly or in
4 concert with others, to intimidate by threat of force or violence
5 (~~any administrator, faculty member, or student of any university,~~
6 ~~college, or community or technical college who~~) an employee,
7 contractor, or student of any institution of higher education, or an
8 official, or volunteer acting as an official, for athletic activities
9 of any institution of higher education, while that person is in the
10 peaceful discharge or conduct of his or her duties or studies.

11 (2) A person violating this section is guilty of a (~~gross~~
12 ~~misdemeanor and shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars, or~~
13 ~~imprisoned in jail not more than six months, or both such fine and~~
14 ~~imprisonment~~) class C felony punishable under chapter 9A.20 RCW.

15 (3) As used in this section, "institution of higher education"
16 has the same meaning as in RCW 28B.92.030.

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