

Senate Fiscal Agency  
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**SFA**



**BILL ANALYSIS**

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House Bill 4815 (Substitute S-1 as reported)  
Sponsor: Representative Paul Tesanovich  
House Committee: Labor and Occupational Safety  
Senate Committee: Human Resources, Labor and Veterans Affairs

Date Completed: 10-14-97

### **RATIONALE**

Team sports, especially ice hockey and soccer, evidently have been seeing an increasing interest and participation among younger age groups. Many children begin playing a sport competitively at an early age and, by 11 years of age, some children possess the necessary skills and knowledge to officiate a lower level game. Reportedly, some sports programs, especially those in rural areas, are having difficulty employing enough officials to staff adequately all the levels of play, especially the lower level games. There have been suggestions that the shortage of available referees to officiate games for children's sports programs could be filled by experienced minors 11, 12, or 13 years of age.

### **CONTENT**

The bill would amend the Youth Employment Standards Act to allow a minor 11, 12, or 13 years of age to work as a youth athletic program referee or umpire for an age bracket younger than his or her own age.

The Act generally prohibits the employment of a minor younger than 14 years of age except for minors 11 years of age or older who work as golf caddies, or minors 13 years of age or older who work in certain farming operations.

MCL 409.103

### **ARGUMENTS**

*(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)*

#### **Supporting Argument**

Many minors under 14 years of age are serious participants in the sports they would referee or umpire. Since amateur sports officials are independent contractors, the minors would be able to accept or reject assignments at will. Therefore,

parents would be able to participate in the decision-making about their child's participation in certain assignments, time of work, and length of work. Officiating a game could provide an opportunity to develop leadership and responsibility skills as well as approach the sport in a different light. Reportedly, for hockey and other sports, an interested person would have to pass a minimum testing requirement to become a referee. A minor 11, 12, or 13 years of age already could have several years of playing experience and, in a proper mentoring environment, could become a successful referee or umpire.

#### **Opposing Argument**

Some people believe a minor 11, 12, or 13 years of age would not be mentally or emotionally capable of handling the duties of an referee or umpire. There are concerns that a child so young would not be able to keep an impartial mindset when faced with challenges from irate parents and coaches during a controversial call.

**Response:** In many circumstances, a younger referee or umpire would be paired with an older official who would act as a mentor. The older official would usually deal with the irate parents or coaches and would handle the situation appropriately.

Legislative Analyst: N. Nagata

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: M. Tyszkiewicz

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.