

**2026 -- S 2495**

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LC004829

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**S T A T E   O F   R H O D E   I S L A N D**

**IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026**

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**A N   A C T**

**RELATING TO EDUCATION -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS**

Introduced By: Senators LaMountain, McKenney, Felag, Burke, Gallo, Tikoian, DiPalma, Murray, and Appollonio

Date Introduced: February 06, 2026

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1        SECTION 1. Chapter 16-21 of the General Laws entitled "Health and Safety of Pupils" is  
2 hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

3        **16-21-44. Policy on addressing and prohibiting hazing in student athletics.**

4        (a) The department of elementary and secondary education (the "department"), in  
5 conjunction with the Rhode Island interscholastic league (the "interscholastic league"), shall  
6 establish an anti-hazing policy (hereinafter "policy") to address acts of hazing in student athletics.  
7 The guiding principle behind this policy is that hazing, bullying and harassment have no place in  
8 any school environment. This policy shall incorporate best practices as determined by the  
9 department and the interscholastic league. This policy shall also establish zero tolerance for hazing  
10 and ensure discipline for hazing incidents is transparent and consistently applied across the state.

11        (b) This policy shall include the following:

12        (1) Definitions and illustrations of hazing;

13        (2) Sanctions and penalties to be imposed on students and student-athletes who engage in  
14 hazing incidents, which penalties may include, but are not limited to, suspension from a team, the  
15 periods of such suspension, and where appropriate, team-level consequences, which may include  
16 the cancelation of a team's season;

17        (3) The recognition that consent by a person being subjected to an act of hazing is not a  
18 defense under this section;

19        (4) Education and prevention components that incorporate the opportunity to connect with

1     any emerging statewide efforts around school climate, anti-bullying, and anti-hate initiatives in  
2     Rhode Island schools; and

3             (5) A requirement that each student-athlete subject to this policy shall, prior to attending  
4     any team practices, meetings, games, or other functions, sign an acknowledgement and recognition  
5     that a violation of the policy may result in the imposition of penalties and sanctions. This document  
6     may be a separate acknowledgement or combined with other documents student-athletes are  
7     required to sign as a condition of participation.

8             (d) The department and the league shall use best practices to establish a comprehensive  
9     definition for hazing. By way of guidance, and not as a limitation, the definition of hazing should  
10    include as an element, the imposition or activity of humiliating, degrading, abusing, or endangering  
11    a person, often in the context of a group setting.

12             (e) Every school and school district participating within the Rhode Island interscholastic  
13    league shall be subject to the provisions of this section and the anti-hazing policy.

14             SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO EDUCATION -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS

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- 1        This act would direct the department of elementary and secondary education, in
- 2        conjunction with the Rhode Island interscholastic league, to promulgate rules and regulations to
- 3        address, minimize, and establish an anti-hazing policy for acts of hazing in student athletics.
- 4        This act would take effect upon passage.

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