

SENATE, No. 1817

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 8, 2018

Sponsored by:

Senator PATRICK J. DIEGNAN, JR.

District 18 (Middlesex)

SYNOPSIS

“Steven’s Law;” prohibits use of non-wood bats in certain organized games.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT prohibiting the use of non-wood bats in certain organized
2 games, designating the act as “Steven’s Law,” and supplementing
3 Title 5 of the Revised Statutes.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

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8 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

9 a. The hitting of baseballs using non-wood bats may cause a
10 baseball to repel off of a bat at a velocity that exceeds the human
11 reaction time necessary to perceive the ball and properly react;

12 b. While the safety hazard presented by non-wood bats is
13 difficult to quantify, it is generally agreed that non-wood bats hit
14 the ball with greater force than wood bats and present a greater risk
15 of injury;

16 c. Between 1991 and 2001, 15 players were killed by batted
17 balls from bats determined to be made of non-wood aluminum,
18 composite, or unknown substances, while only two deaths are
19 known to have been caused by bats made from wood;

20 d. Steven Domalewski, a 12-year-old pitcher from the Police
21 Athletic League in Wayne, New Jersey, was struck in the chest with
22 a ball hit by a non-wood bat, and suffered a near-fatal disruption of
23 the heart’s electrical system that caused his heart to stop, sending
24 him into a coma; and

25 e. It is necessary and proper for the State to intervene to protect
26 the health and safety of its young athletes, and that the benefits
27 associated with a reduced risk of death or serious injury outweigh
28 the costs associated with replacing non-wood bats with wood bats.

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30 2. As used in this act:

31 “Minor” means a person who is less than 18 years of age.

32 “Non-wood bat” means any non-wood baseball bat including, but
33 not limited to, a bat made of metal, titanium, scandium, aluminum
34 or any other alloy compound, but shall not include any wood,
35 composite, laminated or composite-coated wood bat that shall be
36 approved for play upon verified test data that these bats perform,
37 weigh and are balanced like wood bats.

38 “Organized game” means any baseball game organized by or
39 affiliated with: a public or nonpublic school; any nonprofit youth
40 serving organization as defined by section 1 of P.L. 1999, c.432
41 (C.15A:3A-1), including but not limited to, Little Leagues, Babe
42 Ruth Leagues, Police Athletic Leagues, and the American Legion; a
43 county or municipal recreation department; or the governing body
44 of a county or municipality.

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46 3. It shall be unlawful to use a non-wood bat in any organized
47 game in which minors are participants, excluding those games
48 where one of the teams participating in the game is organized by or

1 affiliated with a school, nonprofit youth organization, county or
2 municipal recreation department, or governing body of a county or
3 municipality outside of this State.

4 The board of education of a school district, the governing board
5 or chief school administrator of a nonpublic school, the governing
6 body of a county or municipality, or the governing body of a
7 nonprofit youth serving organization shall ensure compliance with
8 the provisions of this act in any organized game it organizes or is
9 affiliated with, or in which its team participates.

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11 4. This act shall take effect on the first day of the seventh
12 month after enactment.

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STATEMENT

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17 This bill, designated "Steven's Law," prohibits the use of non-
18 wood bats in organized baseball games in which minors are
19 participants.

20 Over the past three to four decades, non-wood bats have almost
21 completely replaced wood bats in youth and scholastic baseball and
22 softball leagues. It is generally accepted that non-wood bats hit the
23 ball with greater force and velocity than wood bats, thereby
24 reducing the amount of time a defender has to perceive and properly
25 react to the ball. Therefore, much concern has been raised over the
26 health and safety risks posed by the widespread use of non-wood
27 bats, particularly for children. Many young athletes have been
28 seriously injured and even killed by batted balls that have been hit
29 with non-wood bats. Steven Domalewski, a 12-year-old pitcher
30 from the Police Athletic League of Wayne, New Jersey, suffered a
31 coma after a batted ball from a non-wood bat struck him in the chest
32 and caused his heart to stop. In the interest of protecting New
33 Jersey's young athletes from the risk of serious injury imposed by
34 the use of non-wood bats, this bill prohibits the use of non-wood
35 bats in any organized game in which minors are participants,
36 excluding those games where one of the participating teams comes
37 from outside of this State.

38 The board of education of a school district, the governing board
39 or chief school administrator of a nonpublic school, the governing
40 body of a municipality, or the governing body of a nonprofit youth
41 serving organization would ensure compliance with the provisions
42 of this bill in any organized game it sponsors or in which its team
43 participates.