

**SENATE, No. 3379**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**219th LEGISLATURE**

INTRODUCED JANUARY 28, 2021

**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:*

7  
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.

29  
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.

45  
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.