

# **Alabama's Sports Officials Bill**

**Alabama has become the 16<sup>th</sup> state to toughen the punishment on angry sports fans who attack game officials, coaches, and administrators.**

**The Alabama House voted, 75-1, in December to give final approval to Senate Bill 16, sponsored by Senator Rodger Smitherman (D-Birmingham). The bill, which had passed the Senate earlier by a 31-0 margin, was signed by Gov. Don Siegelman, on December 28, 2001, and becomes law on March 31, 2002.**

**It creates new crimes of harassing, menacing and assaulting sports officials, coaches and administrators. The punishments are harsher than normal for convictions for harassment, menacing and assault. For example, a second-degree assault can carry a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, but under the new law, a second-degree assault of a sports official, coach, and administrator could result in a sentences of up to 20 years.**

**The legislation applies to all levels of athletics from church softball to professional sports.**