



# **NEW YORK STATE PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.**

*"Promoting Sportsmanship and Citizenship through Interscholastic Athletics"*

May 18, 2006

Dear Member of the NYS Assembly,

On behalf of the 1,587 member schools of the New York State Public High School Athletic Association representing both public and non-public institutions, I am writing to alert you to our **opposition** of bill 2162A submitted by Assemblyman Joseph D. Morelle.

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*2nd Vice President*

**PATRICK CALNON**  
*Past President*

## **STAFF**

**NINA VAN ERK**  
*Executive Director*  
[nvanerk@nysphsaa.org](mailto:nvanerk@nysphsaa.org)

**WALTER EATON**  
*Assistant Director*  
[weaton@nysphsaa.org](mailto:weaton@nysphsaa.org)

**LLOYD MOTT**  
*Assistant Director*  
[lmott@nysphsaa.org](mailto:lmott@nysphsaa.org)

**JOE ALTIERI**  
*Assistant Director*  
[altieri@nysphsaa.org](mailto:altieri@nysphsaa.org)

**KATHLEEN HIGLE**  
*Treasurer*  
[khigle@nysphsaa.org](mailto:khigle@nysphsaa.org)

The legislation would alter the manner in which we qualify high school athletes for regional and state competition in individual sports. As a non-profit association of member schools our fundamental concern with the proposed legislation is the imposed impact that it would have on associations in general. During the past few years the Association membership has attempted to encourage Mr. Morelle to allow the NYSPHSAA's Constitution and democratic process to drive the procedure for change. Legislative driven change will reduce our ability to serve at the direction of our membership and will begin to deteriorate the ability of all associations to function in a proactive manner.

It is important to understand that Assemblyman Morelle's principal issue is the manner in which we qualify athletes for our state wrestling championship. Over the past three years the NYSPHSAA membership approved the growth of our tournament from a **one-class** tournament where each of our eleven sections qualified one wrestler for each of the 15 weight classes (**165 total participants**), to a **two-division** tournament with each section sending one wrestler per weight class in each division (**315 total participants**). The NYSPHSAA has recently approved additional participation for the wrestling tournament. The **2007 tournament** will further expand the field of participants by filling the four byes in each weight class thus adding an additional 120 student athletes (**435 total participants**). Assemblyman Morelle, prompted by the New York State Wrestling Coaches Association, has been advocating for a multiple entry system based on the number of schools in each section. After careful consideration the proposal has **not** been supported by the NYSPHSAA Wrestling Committee and Executive Committee representatives.

Their proposal would qualify **690 NYSPHSAA wrestlers** for the state tournament. The fiscal impact to school districts and Sections for transportation, lodging and meals would significantly impact already burdened school budgets. The tournament costs would increase due to venue rental and officials fees which will ultimately be imposed on our member schools.

The other sports effected by the legislation would be golf, tennis, bowling and gymnastics. The current language of the legislation does not address the tournament formats in the sports of field hockey, boy's lacrosse, girl's lacrosse, ice hockey, indoor track and outdoor track that are conducted in less than five classes, or do not provide for proportionality. If the intent of the legislation is to provide for proportionality of representation in all of our 30 state championship tournaments then schools and Sections will be further burdened financially and all sports would be effected.

On behalf of the NYSPHSAA membership I urge you to oppose bill #2162 when it comes to the floor of the Assembly for a vote enabling school district administrators to direct the growth of and fiscal impact related to the interscholastic athletic programs in New York.

Sincerely,

Nina VanErk  
Executive Director