

West Virginia's new transfer portal in question after blowout football games

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CHARLESTON, WV (WOWK) – Just two weeks into West Virginia's 2023 high school football season, many people are questioning if lawmakers fumbled the new transfer portal rule.

The backlash has come after a number of blowout games with some schools winning by 50 points or more. Athletes and parents have taken to social media blaming the new rule which passed in the 2023 Legislative Session.

"It's not that there haven't been some scores like that in the past, but I think this situation with the transfer portal has compounded that issue," said Del. Dana Ferrell (R-Kanawha). "It's a fact that some of these teams like St. Albans, South Charleston and Riverside have all been depleted by transfers."

As the law stands, high school athletes are now able to transfer to another school one time without being penalized and losing a year of eligibility. According to Ferrell, there are also no restrictions within the law that require students to transfer within their district.

The bill failed the last two sessions, but passed this year because Ferrell said it was tacked on with the Hope Scholarship like a "trojan horse." However, those in favor of the bill argued it would allow athletes

more freedom.

"They're transferring across multiple school districts to get to a program that's bigger or has a chance to make the playoffs, they keep loading up like an all-star team," Ferrell said. "I'm not blaming them. I'm blaming us as a legislature. We made a mistake and we need to fix it because we created an environment that encourages these kinds of decisions, and that's on us, not the parents, not the coaches, that's on us."

Ferrell is looking to reverse the transfer portal decision during the 2024 Legislative Session; however, he believes a lot of damage will be done from now until then saying even the schools that are winning are losing in the end.

"There's nothing we can do across the entire academic year, which means this is not going to get better," Ferrell said. "It's going to get worse as we proceed through football and especially in basketball season."