

home > regional news > regional news

<b>Regional News</b>	Loudoun	Fairfax	Fauquier	Clarke	Rappahannock	Prince William	Cl...
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<b>Regional News</b>
Clarke News
Fairfax News
Fauquier News
Loudoun News
Prince William News
Rappahannock News
Entertainment
Real Estate
Classifieds
Marketplace
Business Directory
Special Sections
Today's Print Ads
Weather
About Us
Advertising
Motorsports

<b>Other TCN sites</b>
Society Pages



## Youth sports leagues kicking mad over park proposal

By Dominic Bonaiuto and Jack Lavelle of the Capital News Service  
01/25/2006

Del. Robert Hull (D-38th) of Annandale has submitted a bill proposing to prohibit the use of public parks after 6 p.m. and on Sundays as part of what is being called the Home Serenity and Tranquility Act.

Hull said he does not necessarily support the proposal, but he put it forth for discussion at the request of a constituent who has an issue with a nearby private school renting out its fields.

Under the proposal, athletic fields could be used only between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Exceptions could be made with the unanimous consent of residents within a 65-yard radius. Violators would face a \$500 fine for the first violation and \$750 for subsequent violations.

Fairfax Little League staged a protest rally over the weekend, and the county Board of Supervisors is voicing stiff opposition.

Board Chairman Gerry Connolly (D) said Fairfax needs more fields not less, adding that providing children with recreational opportunities is a key component of the county's gang prevention efforts.

County staff estimates the proposal would result in the loss of 10,000 community-use hours on local fields.

Two-thirds of all fields are located within 65 yards of a residence. Approximately 70 percent of community use for lit fields and 50 percent unlit fields occurs after 6 p.m. and on Sundays, according to staff.

Connolly said the effect on county youth athletics would be "devastating."

Hull acknowledged most of the bill was "unworkable," but said the resident who suggested the bill raises valid questions about a home owner's right to peaceful enjoyment of their property and the demands placed on public parks.

The bill has been referred to the House Courts of Justice Committee, which is chaired by

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Springfield Del. Dave Albo (R-42nd), who has indicated to local officials that he does not expect the bill to advance out of committee.

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#### Reader Opinions:

- ▶ thomas Beezy Jan, 25 2006  
this sounds like someone who bought his home knowing the adjacent land would remain out of private development and open because it was a public park, and now has decided he did not consider the fact there is noise associated with public use of the land. therefore he does not want anyone to enjoy the open space and interfere with the benefit he has on his adjoining homes on this park land. a nimbby in action

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