

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Member Troy Carter

Markup of 2 Bills, Full Committee

July 23, 2025

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I sincerely appreciate the intent and hard work that's been put into creating this legislation. For far too long, student-athletes have generated enormous revenue for colleges, universities, conferences, and the NCAA without being allowed to share in the value from their own hard work.

However, I feel that the bill, as drafted, misses the mark.

Yes — we need to create a fair, national framework for NIL. But we must not lose sight of who this legislation, and the entire NCAA system, is supposed to serve: the student athletes.

As written, the SCORE Act undermines existing legal protections that student-athletes have used to fight for fair treatment and shields the NCAA and major sports conferences from being held accountable. In recent years, these young people have turned to the courts to advocate for their rights — and they've won. But this legislation could undercut those hard-fought gains by preempting state laws and narrowing the path for future legal recourse without adequate alternatives.

States across the country have stepped up to protect student-athletes where the federal government has failed to do so. However, this bill would override many of those efforts, potentially rolling back stronger protections enacted by state legislatures that are in the best position to understand their higher education institutions and student populations.

And finally, perhaps most troubling of all, this bill could block student-athletes from organizing or negotiating over basic necessities, such as medical care, long-term health coverage, or protections against abusive training practices. If we lock in a system that denies athletes a seat at the table, we are not reforming the system; we are merely rebranding the status quo.

I encourage revisions to the SCORE Act that reflect the lived experiences of student-athletes, including those at smaller, less-resourced programs like HBCUs. Any meaningful NIL legislation must address the real-world challenges these students face both on and off the field. In addition, we need an independent body—not the NCAA—to establish and enforce clear safety standards, free from conflicts of interest.

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The bill must also commit to equity, transparency, and accountability. That includes stronger enforcement of Title IX, NIL rules that protect student-athletes from exploitative contracts, and transparency in both how athletic departments generate and allocate revenue as well as how much time they demand from student-athletes.

All of that being said, I have seen amendments from the majority that get us closer to something many of us on this side of the aisle could support. With work we can bridge this divide and reach our common goal not just to regulate NIL but to empower the next generation of athletes with dignity, safety, and fairness.

Let's take this opportunity to get it right. I ask the chair to continue to work with me between here and the floor to get to a product we can all be proud of.

Thank you, I yield back.