

**Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery**  
**of**  
**Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.**

*Markup of 2 Bills, Full Committee*

**July 23, 2025**

Today we are marking up two bills – legislation addressing college sports and a bill to reauthorize user fees for over-the-counter drugs.

We will begin with the SCORE Act. This legislation is nothing more than a major giveaway to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and conferences. It fails to offer meaningful protections to college athletes and completely ignores the true crises facing colleges and universities.

I continue to believe that Republicans are ignoring the real threat to our colleges and universities right now. Trump continues to destroy America's higher education system with reduced federal research dollars, taxes on endowments, and cuts to federal student aid. I'd like to remind everyone that college sports cannot exist without colleges.

Let's also be clear about what this bill does and does NOT do. The SCORE Act gives the NCAA and conferences nearly limitless and unchecked authority to govern how athletes get paid, if they can transfer schools, and how much time they can be required to spend training, traveling, and competing.

It does NOT provide meaningful, strong, or enforceable protections for athletes with respect to their health and safety. It also does NOT include sufficient guardrails to protect against predatory agents or any recourse if an athlete is harmed.

Instead, the SCORE Act slams the courtroom door in the face of college athletes. We should be celebrating the progress college athletes have won in the courts to profit from their own name, image, and likeness, share in the revenue they bring their institutions, and more. Yet this bill gives the NCAA and conferences unchecked authority to roll back or limit the many hard-fought benefits athletes have won in court and in state legislatures. Congress should not be doing anything that stifles the progress athletes have won.

I, along with my Democratic colleagues, expressed these concerns last week at our Subcommittee markup and I encouraged Chairs Guthrie and Bilirakis to not rush and move ahead this week with a full Committee markup to give us more time to work together to address our concerns with this bill. But Republicans chose to move ahead anyway, and that's unfortunate because that's not how you build bipartisan support for a bill like this.

We will also markup H.R. 4273, legislation to reauthorize the Food and Drug Administration's user fee program for over-the-counter (OTC) monograph drugs.

OTC drugs are critical products for Americans that help them manage certain health conditions and save money on their health care costs. Congress authorized this program in 2020 to facilitate staffing at FDA to modernize OTC reviews. These staff are critical in ensuring the agency can more quickly provide safe, effective and innovative OTC drug products to consumers and protect them from safety risks. That is why working toward a timely reauthorization of this program is so important.

However, we have heard from industry and patient groups that the continued success of the user fee program hinges on the FDA's ability to recruit and retain staff. That is one reason why I am deeply concerned with the Trump Administration's dismantling of FDA's staff and staff at our other public health agencies.

Industry experts have said that the Trump Administration's indiscriminate terminations at FDA will delay timely patient access to products regulated by FDA and impact surveillance efforts, including delayed inspections. Companies have said they are already experiencing longer response times, which will lead to even more delays for other reviews.

The Trump Administration's layoffs, coupled with drastic proposed budget cuts are going to lead to fewer lifesaving drugs coming to market. Last week, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office released an analysis that concluded the Trump Administration's reckless dismantling of the National Institutes of Health and staff reductions at FDA will lead to 53 fewer new drugs approved for Americans. And it could be even larger than that because CBO could not conduct an analysis of the drastic 40 percent cut that the Trump Administration is proposing for NIH. Instead, they could only do an analysis of a 10 percent cut. I can only imagine how many more drugs will not come to market if Republicans cave to the Administration again.

This all means there will be fewer cutting-edge and lifesaving treatments for patients with cancer and other diseases. If Republicans are serious about wanting to get safe drugs to market that will save people's lives, they would reject Trump's extreme budget and finally join us in doing some real oversight of this Administration. The silence has got to end.

And with that, I yield back the balance of my time.