

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Member Marc Veasey

Markup of 2 Bills, Full Committee

July 23, 2025

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to also thank Gus Bilirakis for everything that he is doing to bring light to this issue. I think that it is very important we have a bill, I just don't want to have the wrong bill.

One of the things that have really concerned me is this characterization by some people and the wild wild west, saying that now and today we live in the wild wild west of sports. I want to tell you about the old west and then I'm going to tell you about the new west.

Here are some of the things that happened in the old west. In the old west in Dallas, Texas, back in the 1980s, for those of you that are old enough to remember the 80s, we had a scandal at SMU University where students being paid to sleep with recruits and being paid to sleep with star players. They were given furs; they were given cash. That's what was happening in the old west. They went on something called the death penalty, that was devastating for that program.

One of the star running backs, one of the greatest running backs of all time, Eric Dickerson. They wanted him really badly in College Station. They said "come down here we'll give you a Pontiac Firebird". He went down to College Station and went and got a Pontiac Firebird and drove it back to Dallas. That's what was happening in the old west.

I can tell you other stories about football players having envelopes of cash put under pizza trays after the games. That's the old west.

Don't let some of these coaches, some of these high profile, recently retired coaches and other people that are football icons that I enjoyed watching play, a lot of them were the problems in the old west.

Now they are saying that the new west is a big problem and look I don't like everything about the new west, Mr. Chairman. I don't like people getting in the transfer portal when they are sitting on the bench during March Madness. I don't like these shady contracts and these shady agents that are literally going through these low-income neighborhoods trying to get these kids into these terrible contracts. I don't like that. I don't like the fact that some of these kids are going to transfer so many times that they will probably never get a college degree if you go year after year after year, but that doesn't mean I want to close the portal for them. We're not trying to tell other kids that are non-student athletes, that are non-athletes, that we're going to put a cap on how many times they can transfer. So why are we trying to do that with these kids?

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There are some problems with this system that we need to fix, but I don't want anybody romanticizing about the old west. You can go back to all sorts of stories like I just talked about with SMU, with Penn State, and others. There were terrible things, terrible, awful things that were happening during the old west. We need a new system, and we need a new system that works for parents and for students and for universities and for fans and that is fair for all.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.