

Statement of Full Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade

Hearing on “Winning Off the Field: Legislative Proposal to Stabilize NIL and College Athletics”

June 12, 2025

With all due respect to my colleagues, and to today’s witnesses, I simply do not think today’s hearing is a good use of this Subcommittee’s time. We’re talking about college sports when the Trump Administration is determined to destroy our universities.

We have held countless hearings about college sports over the last few years. In every hearing, we have heard that for decades the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) failed to put the interests of college athletes first. Every witness we have heard from has agreed that finally allowing college athletes to profit from their Name, Image, and Likeness is a good thing and represents a long overdue change in college sports. Changing the rules so that college athletes can now profit from Name, Image, and Likeness was a hard-fought change won by college athletes, not by Congressional action, but through state legislatures and the court system.

Just last week, a court approved a historic settlement in *House v. NCAA* that allows schools to pay college athletes, subject to a salary cap of \$20.5 million per school. This is the very first time the NCAA will allow colleges and universities to pay college athletes for the talents those athletes bring to their institutions, conferences, and the NCAA.

Instead of celebrating progress made by college athletes, the Republican Majority has called a hearing today on a legislative draft that would bring this progress to a dramatic halt. The legislation grants the NCAA a broad exemption from legal liability and seemingly limitless and unchecked authority to govern how college athletes can get paid, transfer schools, or be represented by an agent. Rather than offering college athletes new, strong, enforceable protections, the Republican bill simply codifies recent NCAA health and safety rules but leaves college athletes no way to enforce violations of those protections.

The bill does not offer any meaningful protections to help ensure college students don’t hire bad actors as agents, and it does not provide pathways to relief if they do. Instead, it simply allows the NCAA and conferences to require agents to register with those institutions. The act of registration with a third party will do little to help college athletes and could create a false sense of security regarding the integrity of registered agents.

As we discuss this bill, I believe it is important that we don’t do anything that stifles the progress being won by the students that the NCAA is supposed to represent.

The landscape of modern college sports is well on its way to being developed by these recent court decisions and Congress should allow that work to play out. Instead, this Committee

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should be focused on the very real issues facing colleges and universities as well as everyday Americans.

Because the bottom line is there is no college sports if there are no colleges. And that's where we were headed under the Trump Administration.

Thank you, I yield back Mr. Chairman.