

June 1, 2026

The Honorable Ted Cruz
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Support for the Protect College Sports Act of 2026

Dear Senator Cruz and Senator Cantwell:

On behalf of the University of Louisville, we write to thank you for your leadership and to urge swift passage of the *Protect College Sports Act of 2026*. Your bill is the first serious, comprehensive answer to a crisis that incremental fixes, court settlements, and conference politics have failed to resolve. It establishes a uniform national standard for Name, Image, and Likeness; grants a carefully limited antitrust exemption so college sports can finally make and enforce its own rules; and—critically—creates the *option* for institutions and conferences to consolidate media rights so that revenue can support every program, at every school, and the student-athletes who make it all possible.

The present trajectory of college athletics points toward irreparable damage—financial and otherwise—for the vast majority of America's colleges and universities. Inconsistent state laws, relentless litigation, and widening gaps in conference revenue have forced even well-run institutions into impossible budget choices. Costs are spiraling while the system has no lawful means to maximize the revenue that could offset them. The athletes most exposed are not the handful at the top; they are the women's and Olympic-sport competitors whose scholarships and programs are first on the chopping block when departments scramble to fund the revenue sports that keep the enterprise afloat.

This is a structural problem, not a story of individual mismanagement. By the NCAA's own definition, only about one in ten Division I public athletic departments were ever financially self-sustaining, even in the best of times. The notion that these departments stand on their own is one of the most durable fictions in American higher education. No single school can fix this, and no school should be asked to compete its way out of a problem that federal law created and only federal law can solve.

Incremental adjustments will not suffice. Your legislation is the first to put comprehensive reform on the table, and its core provisions map directly onto what college sports actually needs:

1. A uniform national framework for NIL and governance. The state-by-state patchwork is ungovernable—a race to the bottom in which each legislature chases a fleeting recruiting edge. Section 101 and Title I replace that chaos with a clear, preemptive national standard that gives institutions, conferences, and student-athletes the legal certainty they have lacked for years. Only Congress can deliver this, and the limited antitrust exemption in the bill is what finally lets the enterprise make and enforce a single set of rules.

2. A modern economic model with revenue-enhancement optionality. College football is the second-most-watched sport in America, yet it generates only the fifth-most revenue—because conferences are forced to bid against one another and media companies, not schools, control the schedule. Title II's amendments to the Sports Broadcasting Act of 1961 give college sports the *option* to negotiate media rights through a single-seller model, putting control back in the hands of the institutions and tying revenue to the viewership the games actually command. We want to be precise about this: optionality is not a mandate, and consolidation does not mean equal distribution. Big brands should thrive; smaller schools and non-revenue sports should survive. Framed as a tool rather than a requirement, this provision is difficult to oppose in good faith—no institution should argue against having every lawful means available to serve its student-athletes.

3. Real protections for student-athletes in a professionalizing environment. Sections 105 through 112 give student-athletes enforceable standards for academic freedom, medical coverage, health and safety, transfer fairness, and economic participation—while preserving the educational promise that distinguishes college sports from the professional leagues. These are not abstractions. Our own women's swimming program recently finished seventh at the NCAA Championships with a team grade-point average above 3.0. That is who this is for, and that is what the bill protects.

The stakes are not confined to campus. An independent economic-impact analysis found that University of Louisville Athletics generates roughly **\$1.28 billion in economic activity annually** for our city and region. Multiply that across the hundreds of communities that college sports sustains, and the cost of inaction comes into focus: fewer programs, fewer jobs, fewer American Olympians, and far fewer young people whose lives are changed by the opportunity to compete and earn a degree.

American higher education is at an inflection point, and only comprehensive reform can clear both chambers and become law. Half-measures will leave us with a caste system of haves and have-nots—the predictable end of which is a narrower, more unequal, and far less American institution. We have studied this problem long enough. The time for studying it is over.

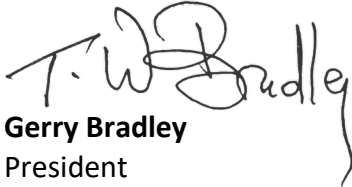
The *Protect College Sports Act of 2026* allows compensation while preserving the connection to education with finite eligibility and fair competition. It represents the best chance we have to preserve college sports as a national asset—an unmatched engine of social mobility, leadership, and educational opportunity for young Americans. The University of Louisville stands firmly behind it, and we remain at your disposal to assist in any way that advances its passage.

Thank you for your service to our country and for your consideration of this urgent matter.

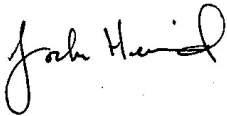
Respectfully,



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