



June 12, 2026

The Honorable Ted Cruz  
Chairman  
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
167 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
511 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cruz and Ranking Member Cantwell:

On behalf of Rice University Athletics, I write to express my support for the bipartisan Protect College Sports Act of 2026 and to commend your leadership in advancing a legislative framework to address the most pressing challenges facing college sports today.

Rice University has a longstanding commitment to the integration of athletic and academic excellence. Our student-athletes—who compete in 17 NCAA Division I varsity sports as members of the American Conference—exemplify what college athletics is meant to be: young men and women who pursue rigorous academic achievement while competing at the highest level of intercollegiate competition. The environment in which we operate today, however, threatens the very model that makes this possible.

The current landscape—defined by a patchwork of state laws, relentless litigation, and the absence of a consistent national framework—has created conditions that are difficult to navigate and impossible to sustain. As administrators, coaches, and student-athletes, we are operating without the legal clarity and certainty that is foundational to sound planning and institutional stewardship.

As a former two-sport (football, track & field) Division I athlete, I believe the long-term sustainability of college athletics hinges on a legally sound framework—one clear, enforceable set of national standards. In my view, that can only come through collective bargaining or meaningful federal legislation. I support the Protect College Sports Act because it provides a far stronger and more stable path forward than the fragmented environment we are operating in today. While no piece of legislation will fully satisfy every perspective, I firmly believe creating a legally defensible model is essential to protecting

the future of college athletics and the opportunities it provides to student-athletes across the country. While not perfect, this legislation is a positive step in the right direction.

Rice Athletics looks forward to continuing to work with you and your colleagues as this legislation advances through the Senate. We remain available to serve as a resource as you refine this important bill and stand ready to support its passage.

Thank you for your dedication to higher education and your commitment to the future of college athletics.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom McClelland", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Thomas H. McClelland, II  
Vice President and Director of Athletics  
Rice University