



June 15, 2026

The Honorable Ted Cruz
United States Senate
167 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
United States Senate
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cruz and Ranking Member Cantwell,

Thank you for your leadership, alongside your colleagues, Senators Coons and Schmitt, in introducing the Protect College Sports Act, for your commitment to addressing the significant challenges facing college athletics, and for your invitation to participate in the “Protecting College Sports: Supporting Student Athletes, Restoring Fair Competition, and Saving the Games Fans Love” hearing on June 3, 2026. As a league that has recently navigated unprecedented realignment to find a better path forward, the Pac-12 is committed to supporting your efforts to establish structural stability for college sports.

The Pac-12 Conference strongly supports the *Protect College Sports Act*, which represents the most impactful and comprehensive reform proposal advanced to date to address the many challenges facing collegiate athletics. After consulting with our membership, we respectfully propose the following refinements to the Act:

Codification of the House Settlement. The Act should codify the House settlement as it was originally negotiated and intended by the parties, providing clarity and stability at a time when interpretations may have drifted significantly from the agreement's original purpose. We understand that industry stakeholders have outlined certain inconsistencies between the House settlement and the Act and we agree that the Act should address those inconsistencies. We also request that the Act incorporate a provision to ensure that the NCAA and the Pac-12, both defendants in this case, are involved in developing any settlement implementation rules, which should not be solely created by the four autonomy conferences and/or the College Sports Commission.

Commission on the Future of College Athletics. The Commission is a thoughtful and critical framework to evaluate the deeper, structural reforms that will require sustained analysis, stakeholder engagement, and broad consensus. We would propose the following refinements to that section of the Act:

- The Commission should provide its recommendation within two years, as opposed to the five years currently contemplated, to maintain momentum for reform. While the Act

remedies many of our most immediate and pressing issues, additional reform advanced by the Commission is critical to prevent future instability and competitive separation between the highest-resourced conferences and institutions and the majority of Division I institutions, and we believe that waiting another five years to address these issues could cause irreparable harm.

- The Commission should be expressly required to evaluate and provide recommendations on these additional topics as part of its duties:
 - Reform governance to recognize student-athletes with a real voice in decision-making and provide for greater diversity of perspective to better and more proportionally reflect DI conferences and institutions;
 - Propose innovative approaches to conference alignment and scheduling that reduce travel burdens and time away from campus, while supporting student-athlete health and welfare and preserving competitive opportunities (e.g., regionalization of non-revenue sports);
 - Create a path for institutions committed to investing to reach the top level of competition (e.g., criteria for autonomy status);
 - Identify sustainable competitive and financial models for institutions of varying resources;
 - Determine appropriate liability allocations among DI members to account for economic realities and proportionate responsibilities for litigations and other liabilities; and
 - Recommend NIL opportunities for international student-athletes to address the current uncertainties regarding how NIL payments could impact their visa status.

Post Career Medical Coverage. With our deep history leading national efforts to increase the rights and benefits of student-athletes, we are very grateful that the Act provides enhanced protections and support for student-athletes. We believe that the Act could be refined to provide additional clarity around an institution's responsibilities for injuries that a student-athlete sustained at another institution or prior to their college enrollment. We also recognize that the five-year commitment to medical coverage could have a more significant financial impact on lower resourced institutions and we encourage continued conversations regarding the long-term sustainability of the five-year obligation and whether additional flexibility or implementation mechanisms are needed.

Protection of Non-Revenue Sports Scholarships and Rosters. Protecting women's and Olympic sports will always be a top priority for the Pac-12 and we believe that the concept of protecting roster spots and scholarships for these sports should not be tied to the triggering of the Sports Broadcasting Act provision. We would, however, encourage refinements to this section of the Act to balance this critical need with providing additional flexibility if this requirement proves financially untenable for certain institutions in future years.

Sports Broadcasting Act. We support the Act's establishment of a structure that preserves important optionality for pooled media rights, which would bring in additional revenue, helping preserve women's and Olympic sports, and providing lower-resourced conferences and institutions a better opportunity to compete at the highest level. We have some concerns, however, that the provision which requires unanimous support for revenue distributions and media rights could be unworkable, and we would be open to a lower threshold, perhaps a super-majority.

Preemption. Many current state laws prohibit any investigation into NIL transactions or reporting of NIL transactions to the NCAA or a conference, essentially precluding schools that violate rules from being held accountable. We would request that this section of the bill be updated to expressly preempt state laws that prohibit investigation or enforcement of college sports rules made in furtherance of the bill or laws that prevent a school from being penalized for violating the rules.

Applicability. We understand that there may be ongoing discussions regarding potentially removing the “pending claims” language from Section 123. We believe it is important to retain this language to avoid further instability in our industry as certain pending claims could have a tremendously disruptive impact on our industry (e.g., recent case where a student-athlete won an injunction prohibiting the NCAA from enforcing anti-gambling rules which are critical to the integrity of our competitions, and a recent challenge in California to House’s revenue sharing cap which if successful, could result in further competitive separation between the highest spenders versus the majority of Division I.)

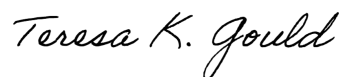
Coaches. We encourage clarification of Section 110(a) to: (a) allow a coach who was dismissed mid-season to be allowed to find another job prior to the end of the competitive year, and (b) ensure that its requirements apply not only based on formal job titles but also to any individual acting in a capacity that coordinates or performs the duties of a head coach or assistant coach. We propose the following language to clarify this point:

An individual who serves, or has served at any point during a competitive season, *or has performed duties typically associated with these roles*, as football athletic personnel for a varsity sports team for intercollegiate football at an institution shall not . . .

As the window for meaningful reform is short and the cost of inaction has never been more real, the *Protect College Sports Act* provides Congress with the best opportunity to date to modernize collegiate athletics in ways that protect its traditions, strengthen its institutions, and recognize the rights and protections that student-athletes deserve.

The Pac-12 is committed to being part of this work. We look forward to working with you, Congress, student-athletes, higher education leaders, and our colleagues across intercollegiate athletics to further refine and ultimately pass this bill to help build a sustainable, student-centered model that preserves opportunity, competitive excellence, and the educational values that make college athletics one of our country’s most cherished and distinctly American institutions.

Sincerely,



Teresa Gould
Commissioner
Pac-12 Conference