



University of Colorado

Boulder | Colorado Springs | Denver | Anschutz

June 15, 2026

The Honorable Ted Cruz
U.S. Senate
167 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Eric Schmitt
U.S. Senate
404 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
U.S. Senate
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Coons
U.S. Senate
218 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Cruz, Cantwell, Schmitt and Coons,

On behalf of the University of Colorado (CU), including the University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder), we write to express our strong support for the bipartisan Protect College Sports Act of 2026. CU Boulder is a premier research, education, and public service institution in Colorado and the country with a marquee Athletic Department that serves over 350 student-athletes.

Across the nation, college athletics is currently in a state of crisis. Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL), the transfer portal, and conference consolidation have transformed the institution of college sports in less than five years. While we believe it is essential that student-athletes are compensated for their NIL rights, the current system is an assortment of disparate rules spread throughout the country, which has left student-athletes confused and vulnerable in an unregulated, uncontrolled environment.

Similarly, unlimited transfers have turned student-athletes into transactional commodities. As a result, a student-athlete's educational goals have been replaced with the pursuit of an often-unrealized promise of greater compensation in the short-term, leaving many student-athletes fewer opportunities for success after their playing careers have ended.

The Protect College Sports Act would bring a semblance of order to a world of chaos. It creates essential guidelines for NIL that ensure student-athletes receive the compensation to which they are entitled, while eliminating shadowy "fake NIL" by establishing clear, enforceable, rules around spending. It creates consistency by superseding the patchwork of over 30 state laws across the nation that create confusion for student-athletes, coaches, and administrators alike.

Office of the President

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June 15, 2026

Page 2

The Protect College Sports Act helps protect the many Olympic and women's sport programs that are critical to giving thousands of student-athletes the opportunity to compete and learn the skills of teamwork, leadership, commitment, resilience, and dedication that will serve them the rest of their lives. These programs are core to our CU Boulder identity. We have produced 120 Olympians and protecting that legacy and the opportunities behind it is one of our deepest commitments. This legislation helps ensure that broad-based opportunity endures for the many student-athletes in non-revenue sports yet to come. Furthermore, we welcome legislative language to strengthen the protections for Olympic and women's sports and the scholarships tied to them, a goal we see as fully in step with what this bill is trying to achieve.

The bill establishes much-needed rules for agents to require greater transparency and cap their fees. It is essential to protect student-athletes by regulating predatory behaviors. Creating such rules is essential and, crucially, this legislation also enables schools to enforce the rules without becoming subject to lawsuits.

The case for stability reaches well beyond our campus. A thriving athletics department is an economic engine for the communities around it. An independent analysis by CU Boulder's Leeds School of Business found that over a recent three-year period, CU athletics drove \$345 million in direct spending across Colorado and supported an average of 2,000 jobs, with local hotels, restaurants, and small businesses directly benefitting. Such community and statewide impact depends on healthy, broad-based athletic programs, not any single sport, and the Protect College Sports Act would give CU Boulder the footing needed to sustain and grow our economic impact on Colorado. What's good for our student-athletes in Boulder is also good for the Colorado communities that grow and thrive alongside us.

These issues reach beyond athletics, and beyond any single school. A stable model for college sports protects the larger academic and research missions that make American universities a national resource and the envy of the world. It is also a shared priority close to home. Though in some ways CU competes with Colorado State University, the Air Force Academy, University of Northern Colorado, and the University of Denver, on this we stand together, united by a common interest in a stable, sustainable system that serves students, communities, and the state of Colorado.

Perhaps most importantly, this legislation prioritizes the core responsibility that institutions of higher education across the country are founded upon: educating and graduating young adults so they become successful the rest of their lives. A federal framework that limits transfers and sets clear eligibility guidelines allows us to return to our north star of preparing student-athletes at CU Boulder for life after they've left our campus.

June 15, 2026

Page 3

We recognize there are many complex issues facing college athletics. The Protect College Sports Act is a crucial first step in protecting schools and the student-athletes we serve at a time when that protection has never been more urgently needed. Subsequent hurdles remain as we navigate this dynamic new world of college athletics, and we support the bill's establishment of a commission to address those longer-term questions. Yet that work should not delay the protections schools and student-athletes need now. The Protect College Sports Act is our best chance to get out of the starting block.

Thank you for your bipartisan leadership and your commitment to college athletics. We urge you to expeditiously pass this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

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Todd Saliman
President, University of Colorado

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Justin Schwartz". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first name "Justin" being the most legible part.

Dr. Justin Schwartz
Chancellor, University of Colorado Boulder

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fernando Lovo". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first name "Fernando" being the most legible part.

Fernando Lovo
Director of Athletics, University of Colorado Boulder