



June 5, 2026

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

Dear Senator Cruz:

SMU is grateful for your leadership in producing and introducing the Protect College Sports Act of 2026 and for your efforts to establish a durable federal name, image, and likeness (NIL) framework for intercollegiate athletics. On behalf of more than 400 current SMU student-athletes and more than 12,000 SMU students, I am writing to say thank you and to lend our full-throated support for federal action that would ultimately benefit higher education.

College athletics remains a vital extension of SMU's educational mission. Through athletics, student-athletes develop leadership skills, pursue academic excellence, build lifelong relationships, and gain opportunities that prepare them for success well after college. College athletics also provides value for our broader university community, bringing people together behind a common purpose and enriching virtually all of our students' college experiences.

Congress plays an important role in creating a stable and sustainable structure that preserves opportunities for future generations. Recent changes surrounding NIL rights, direct student-athlete benefits, transfer activity, and ongoing litigation have created significant uncertainty for institutions and student-athletes alike. While colleges and conferences have worked in good faith to adapt, many of the challenges facing intercollegiate athletics require federal action to provide consistent rules, clarity, and long-term certainty.

Your legislation represents an important step toward creating a national framework that supports student-athlete opportunity while promoting fairness, stability, and accountability across college sports. A thoughtful federal approach can help preserve competitive integrity, support student success, reduce regulatory fragmentation, and provide clear and consistent rules for institutions.

As SMU continues to invest in championship-level collegiate programs and support for our student-athletes, we appreciate your willingness to engage on these issues and advance meaningful solutions. We look forward to continuing to work with you and your colleagues through the legislative process and stand ready to serve as a resource as Congress considers these reforms.

Thank you again for your leadership and for your support of higher education and collegiate athletics. If SMU or I can be of any assistance in this process, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jay Hartzell", is written over a blue rectangular stamp.

Jay Hartzell
President

Jay Hartzell