



June 9, 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,

The Sun Belt Conference and each of its member institutions write to express our sincere appreciation and support for the Protect College Sports Act of 2026. We are grateful for your bipartisan leadership and considerable effort in pursuing a sustainable national framework for college athletes. While we recognize the current draft is not a “perfect” final product, it provides a much-needed foundation for stability in an otherwise chaotic environment.

Currently, instability affects the Sun Belt Conference in immeasurable ways, from roster management challenges due to constant transfers to the barrage of class action lawsuits and settlement damages. A national framework that provides clear authority for the NCAA to establish and enforce rules is essential to restoring stability and reducing costly litigation.

Key Pillars We Support

The Protect College Sports Act addresses several critical areas for the sustainability of college athletics:

- **Preempting State NIL Laws:** The Act would preempt the patchwork of state NIL laws, which is crucial for preventing competitive disadvantages between institutions.
- **Transfer Stability:** We support the Act's efforts to establish a national transfer framework that balances student-athlete opportunity with roster stability and competitive equity.
- **Agent Regulations:** We support the establishment of agent regulations to protect our student-athletes.

- **NCAA Rule-Making Authority:** We welcome the Act's confirmation of the NCAA's authority to set rules regarding eligibility, transfers, agents, and recruiting, including tampering.

Suggested Amendments

While we support the overarching goals of the Act, we believe certain refinements could make the legislation more beneficial.

- **Medical Benefits Duration (Section 106):** The proposed requirement to provide medical benefits for five years post-graduation is three years longer than current NCAA bylaws. We suggest amending this to two years to ensure the requirement remains financially sustainable for all Division I institutions while preserving meaningful protections for student-athletes.
- **Committee Representation (Section 111):** While we support student-athlete engagement on governing boards, we believe the specific number of representatives should be a more manageable figure.
- **Sports Broadcasting Act Amendments:** We have concerns regarding the scope and parties involved in the proposed amendments to the Sports Broadcasting Act and suggest these be carefully reviewed.

Summary

The Sun Belt Conference supports the Protect College Sports Act of 2026 because it reduces costly litigation and provides clear authority for the NCAA to establish and enforce rules that promote competitive equity. We believe the Act is a great first step to creating a stronger foundation for college athletics.

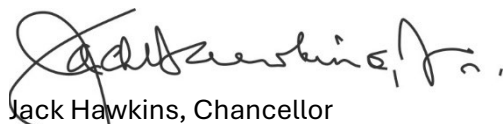
Thank you for your leadership on these critical issues. We stand ready to collaborate with you to pass and refine this essential legislation.

Sincerely,

ALABAMA



Jo Bonner, President
University of South Alabama



Jack Hawkins, Chancellor
Troy University

ARKANSAS




Todd Shields, Chancellor
Arkansas State University


GEORGIA


Kyle Marrero, President (Chair of Sun Belt)
Georgia Southern University


M. Brian Blake, President
Georgia State University

LOUISIANA



Ramesh Kolluru, President
University of Louisiana at Lafayette


Carrie Castille, President
University of Louisiana at Monroe

MISSISSIPPI


Joe Paul, President
The University of Southern Mississippi


NORTH CAROLINA



Heather Norris, Chancellor
Appalachian State University

SOUTH CAROLINA


James Winebrake, President
Coastal Carolina University

VIRGINIA


James Schmidt, President
James Madison University


Brian Hemphill, President
Old Dominion University

WEST VIRGINIA


Brad Smith, President
Marshall University

CC: Sen. Katie Britt (R-AL)
Sen. Tommy Tuberville (R-AL)
Sen. John Boozman (R-AR)
Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR)
Sen. Jon Ossoff (D-GA)
Sen. Raphael Warnock (D-GA)
Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA)
Sen. John Kennedy (R-LA)
Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS)

Sen. Roger Wicker (R-MS)
Sen. Ted Budd (R-NC)
Sen. Thom Tillis (R-NC)
Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC)
Sen. Tim Scott (R-SC)
Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA)
Sen. Mark R. Warner (D-VA)
Sen. Jim Justice (R-WV)
Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV)