

June 15, 2026

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

Re: Support for the Protecting College Sports Act of 2026

Dear Senator Cruz:

On behalf of Washington State University, I write to express our strong support for the *Protecting College Sports Act of 2026* and to thank you for your leadership on this important issue. This legislation represents the most comprehensive effort to date to address the rapidly evolving and increasingly unsustainable landscape of college athletics.

As a public research university and proud member of the Pac-12, Washington State University (WSU) is deeply committed to advancing a model of college athletics that prioritizes student-athlete well-being, academic success, and broad access to competitive opportunities. However, the current system is under significant disruption. A patchwork of state NIL laws, ongoing litigation, and widening disparities in conference resources have created instability that institutions like WSU cannot resolve on their own.

Accelerating external forces within college athletics is also placing pressure on the educational mission that has historically defined programs like ours. At the same time, rising operational costs and uneven revenue distribution are creating significant financial challenges, particularly for universities committed to sponsoring a full complement of sports, including Olympic and women's programs. Without thoughtful reform, these pressures risk undermining student-athlete opportunities and long-term program sustainability.

The *Protecting College Sports Act* offers a meaningful path forward by establishing a consistent national framework for NIL and governance, improving protections for student-athletes, and introducing tools to enhance long-term financial sustainability across a broad range of institutions. These reforms are essential to ensuring that universities like WSU can continue to provide exceptional academic and athletic experiences for our students while maintaining competitive balance nationally.

Importantly, the bill recognizes that a one-size-fits-all model does not serve the diversity of Division I institutions. For WSU, maintaining the ability to compete at a high level while also supporting programs that are vital to our economic impact in the state of Washington, community engagement, campus life, and student development is critical. WSU Athletics generates more than \$89 million each year through tickets and concessions, fundraising, licensing, sponsorship, media, and



conference revenues. Strong athletics programs are closely tied to student engagement and enrollment, particularly in regions like Eastern Washington where WSU serves as a key economic and cultural anchor.

We appreciate that the legislation seeks to provide stability and clarity in an environment that has become increasingly uncertain. The current trajectory, marked by legal ambiguity and structural inequities, poses significant risks not only to institutions, but to the student-athletes who depend on these programs for educational opportunity and personal growth.

While we recognize that additional refinement will be needed as the legislation moves through Congress, Washington State University stands ready to work with you and your colleagues to ensure the final bill reflects the needs of student-athletes and institutions across the country.

Thank you for your continued leadership and for your commitment to strengthening college athletics in a way that preserves its educational foundation and expands opportunity for future generations.

Sincerely,

Betsy Cantwell  
President, Washington State University

CC: Theresa Gould, Commissioner PAC 12