

June 8, 2026

The Honorable Ted Cruz
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cruz and Senator Cantwell:

On behalf of Texas Southern University, I write to express my support for the Protect College Sports Act of 2026 and to thank you for your bipartisan leadership in addressing the rapidly evolving landscape of intercollegiate athletics.

Texas Southern University is a public, historically Black university, an NCAA Division I institution, and a proud member of the Southwestern Athletic Conference. Our student-athletes represent the very best of collegiate athletics—individuals pursuing academic achievement, athletic excellence, leadership development, and meaningful opportunities for lifelong success.

As college athletics continues to navigate unprecedented changes associated with name, image, and likeness compensation, transfer mobility, conference realignment, and evolving revenue models, Congress has an important opportunity to shape a stable and sustainable framework for intercollegiate athletics. Sports are an important element of our institutions; it provides opportunity for advanced education to many who may not otherwise have the opportunity, it is a showcase for our very talented women and men, and vibrant sports programs contribute to the overall student experience and can energize a campus like nothing else. However, while college athletics is important, we are on the verge of losing our national perspective. Legislative action in this area is necessary to preserve the fundamental purpose of the U.S. college and university; i.e., to educate and prepare students for lifelong individual success and service as community leaders who help drive collective success.

Of the many important provisions contained in the Protect College Sports Act, two are particularly significant to Texas Southern University.

First, we strongly support the legislation's efforts to establish national standards governing student-athlete transfers and to strengthen protections against tampering and improper recruiting inducements.

Institutions such as Texas Southern invest significant resources in recruiting, educating, mentoring, and developing student-athletes. Although, student-athletes should retain meaningful opportunities to pursue their academic and athletic goals as well as benefit from their talent, the current transfer environment has created significant disruption for student-athletes, coaches, and institutions throughout Division I athletics. Frequent roster turnover can hinder team cohesion and long-term program development, disrupt students' academic continuity and progress toward degree completion, and ultimately diminish the educational and athletic experience that collegiate athletics is intended to provide.

The establishment of a national transfer framework, coupled with clear anti-tampering provisions, would provide greater stability for student-athletes and institutions alike while helping preserve the educational mission that distinguishes college athletics from professional sports. Texas Southern University believes intercollegiate athletics should remain rooted in higher education and student development, rather than evolve into a purely professional model. Related to this point, there is the need to define the term of athletic eligibility and who is eligible to compete are equally critical.

Second, we are encouraged by the legislation's recognition that the future sustainability of college athletics requires innovative approaches to media rights and athletics revenue.

The provisions allowing institutions and conferences to voluntarily participate in collective media-rights structures represent an important acknowledgment that the long-term health of college athletics depends upon more than the financial success of a small number of conferences. Institutions throughout Division I—including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, regional public universities, and Football Championship Subdivision programs—play a vital role in developing student-athletes, serving communities, preserving traditions, and expanding educational opportunity.

Texas Southern University respectfully encourages continued consideration of policies that allow institutions beyond the largest conferences to participate meaningfully in the future economic growth of college athletics. Such participation will be essential to preserving broad-based athletic opportunities, supporting Olympic and women's sports, and maintaining competitive pathways for institutions serving diverse missions and student populations.

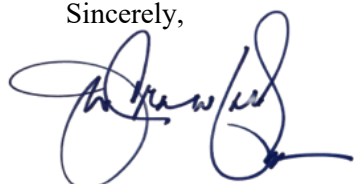
Texas is home to one of the nation's most dynamic higher education ecosystems, encompassing flagship research universities, regional public universities, historically Black colleges and universities, faith-based institutions, and metropolitan-serving institutions that educate large numbers of first-generation and workforce-oriented students. The long-term success of college athletics should not be measured solely by the success of the largest conferences, but by the ability of institutions across this dynamic landscape to provide educational opportunity, athletic competition, and pathways to upward mobility for student-athletes.

We also appreciate the legislation's commitment to student-athlete health and safety, academic protections, scholarship protections, and the preservation of women's and Olympic sports. These provisions reinforce the principle that student-athletes should be supported not only as competitors, but also as students preparing for success beyond athletics.

The Protect College Sports Act represents a thoughtful and constructive effort to restore consistency, fairness, and stability to college athletics while preserving opportunities for future generations of student-athletes. We appreciate your leadership on this important issue and stand ready to serve as a resource as Congress continues its consideration of the legislation.

Thank you for your service and your commitment to the future of college athletics.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. W. Crawford III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

J. W. Crawford III
Vice Admiral, JAGC, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
President, Texas Southern University