



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

June 2, 2026

The Honorable Ted Cruz
United States Senate
167 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-4304

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
United States Senate
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-4705

Dear Senator Cruz and Senator Cantwell,

I want to commend you for working in a bipartisan way to draft and introduce the Protect College Sports Act.

My perspective has been shaped by both what I see happening in college sports today and also significant life experience. I am a two-time university president — South Dakota Mines was Division II in the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference, and UTEP is Division I FBS and just completed the transition from Conference USA to the Mountain West. As a college athlete, I rowed for Oxford against Cambridge and continued to row in club teams in Europe and the United States after graduation. I served for ten years as a Member of Congress on the House Energy and Commerce Committee with jurisdiction over many of the issues you address in your bill.

It goes without saying that we are navigating through an unprecedented period of radical change in college sports. Without federal legislation that allows regulation, and that applies to all states, I fear irreversible damage to college athletics and to student athletes.

The portal has resulted in large numbers of student athletes making multiple transfers during their college career. While student athletes still do better than the student body as a whole when it comes to college completion, the data shows that about 40% of students who enter the portal do not get an offer from another school. And, while student athletes rotate through the portal, they compromise their educational experience, often graduating with a general studies degree and few experiences beyond sports to help guide them toward meaningful careers and professional lives. Your bill addresses this effectively.

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Second, we are now seeing lawsuits questioning the ability of universities and the NCAA to limit college eligibility. With appealing compensation given to college athletes, those 90% or more who will not go on to professional sports have a financial interest in staying in college indefinitely. That is not appropriate for college sports. Your bill addresses this effectively.

Third, your bill enshrines in law provisions related to athlete welfare and seeks to protect Olympic sports and women's sports. I particularly appreciate those provisions.

Finally, while addressing the most urgent problems, your bill leaves the door open to an alternative future in which, if 75% of large universities agree, college sports could take a different path entirely and create a new model that might be significantly better for student athletes and fans than the path we are on. It would be up to us to develop those ideas and work together to pursue them, but your bill allows room for that.

There is a short window to act and a crowded calendar. I appreciate the significant work you and your staffs have put into the development of this bill, and the compromises you have both made to get this far.

I commend you for your work.

Sincerely,

Heather Wilson
President