WAKE FOREST
UNIVERSITY
Office of the President

Peter Rodriguez
President

To: The Honorable Alma Adams; The Honorable Don Davis; The Honorable Chuck Edwards; The Honorable Valerie Foushee; The Honorable Virginia Foxx; The Honorable Pat Harrigan; The Honorable Mark Harris; The Honorable Richard Hudson; The Honorable Brad Knott; The Honorable Addison McDowell; The Honorable Tim Moore; The Honorable Greg Murphy, MD; The Honorable Deborah Ross; The Honorable David Rouzer

cc: The Honorable Thom Tillis; The Honorable Ted Budd

From: Peter Rodriguez

Date: October 9, 2026

Subject: Protect College Sports Act of 2026

At the outset, let me express my appreciation for your careful representation of the people of North Carolina. Prior to arriving here I heard that the North Carolina Delegation works well together to care for and represent the interests of this amazing state.

Since becoming the 15th President of Wake Forest University on July 1, I have spent considerable time with my fellow Chancellors and Presidents across the ACC as we are all committed to strengthening the student athlete experience. To that end, and on behalf of more than 9,600 students, 384 student-athletes, and 13 varsity sports programs, I urge the House to pass the *Protect College Sports Act of 2026* upon returning to session after the midterm election.

I was encouraged by the strong bipartisan vote in the Senate and relayed my gratitude directly to Senators Budd and Tillis a few weeks ago when we met in Washington.

While there was a lot of vigorous debate and compromise to reach consensus legislation, we all agreed on one thing from the outset: College athletics cannot afford another year of uncertainty and upheaval. In the end, it is our student-athletes who suffer most from this chaos.

For years, Congress has heard about the growing instability in college sports: conflicting state NIL laws, constant litigation, escalating expenses, an unsustainable transfer and recruiting environment, and widening financial disparities among institutions and conferences. Meanwhile, colleges and universities are providing more resources to student-athletes while operating under a legal framework that increasingly prevents us from establishing uniform rules, controlling costs, or maximizing the value of the athletic programs they have built.

The consequences of continued inaction are increasingly clear. The greatest risk is not to the handful of programs and athletes at the top of the system but rather to the thousands of student-athletes—particularly women and Olympic-sport athletes—whose scholarships, teams, and opportunities depend upon a *sustainable* economic model for college athletics.

1834 Wake Forest Road | Box 7226 | Winston-Salem, NC 27109 | p 336.758.5213

The *Protect College Sports Act* provides that path forward.

First, it establishes one national framework for college athletics. The current state-by-state patchwork is untenable. National competition requires national rules. The Act establishes federal standards for NIL and other critical areas of college athletics and provides the carefully tailored antitrust protections necessary to make those rules enforceable.

Second, it gives college athletics the tools to build a sustainable economic model. The Act provides institutions and conferences greater flexibility to maximize the value of their media rights, including the option to pursue consolidated media-rights arrangements. This is not a mandate, nor does it require equal revenue distribution. It simply gives institutions the lawful ability to consider economic models that could generate substantially greater resources for student-athletes and help preserve women's, Olympic, and non-revenue sports.

Third, it puts student-athlete protections into federal law. The Act establishes meaningful standards governing academics, medical coverage, health and safety, NIL opportunities, agents, transfers, and student-athlete economic participation. These are protections that should not depend upon where a student-athlete happens to attend school.

The choice before Congress is no longer between the status quo and some hypothetical perfect solution.

The status quo is itself a choice—and it is failing.

Court settlements cannot create a national regulatory system. States cannot solve a national problem individually. Conferences cannot provide themselves with federal antitrust protection. Colleges and universities cannot preserve broad-based athletic opportunities indefinitely while costs escalate and the legal uncertainty surrounding the enterprise continues to grow.

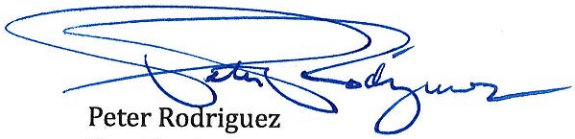
The Senate's 77–22 vote demonstrates that this is neither a Republican issue nor a Democratic issue. It is a recognition across the political spectrum that college athletics needs a durable national framework. After years of debate, Congress now has a bipartisan bill capable of providing it.

There will always be another amendment that could be offered, another issue that could be studied, and another reason to wait. But waiting has consequences. Every year of uncertainty places additional pressure on athletic departments, scholarships, Olympic sports, and the opportunities available to future student-athletes.

On behalf of Wake Forest University and our 384 student-athletes, I urge you to support swift House passage of the *Protect College Sports Act of 2026*.

Thank you for your service to our state and nation and for your commitment to the future of higher education and intercollegiate athletics.

Sincerely,



Peter Rodriguez
President
Wake Forest University