

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 23, 2025

The Honorable Ted Cruz  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
554 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
428 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cruz and Ranking Member Cantwell,

Over the last few years, we have seen the blatant exploitation of college athletes by major athletic conferences, large universities, and the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA), begin to subside. Make no mistake: college athletics is in need of serious and thoughtful reform, but recently, college athletes have begun to share in the enormous profits they generate for their institutions. At the same time, more and more lawmakers are taking seriously our obligation to ensure that the system does not continue to advantage large institutions and the NCAA at the expense of the athletes whose labor makes those profits possible.

As greater attention is focused on reforming the college athletics paradigm, Congress has a unique opportunity to restructure the system to put college athletes first. However, recently proposed legislation – including the *Student Compensation and Opportunity through Rights and Endorsements (SCORE) Act* – threatens to roll back the progress college athletes have made and put the power back into the hands of the NCAA.

Among the SCORE Act's misguided proposals is a broad antitrust exemption for the NCAA. The SCORE Act would grant the NCAA antitrust immunity and shield it from litigation, which has served as the primary mechanism through which athletes can assert their rights and highlight illegal behavior by the NCAA. This antitrust exemption is the top priority for the NCAA because it would permit coordination between the NCAA and its member institutions in ways that primarily serve their own financial and competitive interests. It's no surprise that the NCAA is asking Congress for antitrust immunity: the NCAA keeps losing in court because of its repressive rules that harm athletes.


The NCAA's push for antitrust immunity is not about protecting athlete amateurism or opportunity, it is about power. After a string of court defeats, the NCAA is hoping Congress will grant it the ability to coordinate compensation limits, restrict athlete mobility, and shield it from future legal challenges. Without the threat of antitrust enforcement, the NCAA would once again

have unchecked authority to set national rules that suppress athlete pay and preserve its own financial position.

Furthermore, in 2021, the Supreme Court unanimously ruled in *National Collegiate Athletic Association v. Alston* that the NCAA and its members are not entitled to blanket antitrust immunity. As Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh wrote, “Nowhere else in America can businesses get away with agreeing not to pay their workers a fair market rate...The NCAA is not above the law.” Passing the SCORE Act threatens to undermine the unanimous ruling in *Alston* and inject more uncertainty into the college athletics landscape.

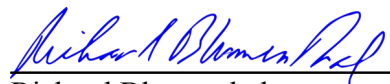
Given the NCAA’s long and well-documented history of exploiting college athletes, we strongly oppose the antitrust exemption included in the SCORE Act. There is no question that Congress must intervene to reform the college athletics ecosystem to benefit college athletes. However, such reform cannot include broad antitrust immunity for the NCAA. Granting this immunity would enable the NCAA to continue unchecked its exploitative practices and take away an important mechanism for college athletes to hold the NCAA and its members accountable.

Sincerely,




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Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator




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Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



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Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



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Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator