

**Opening Statement of Republican Leader Cathy McMorris Rodgers**  
**CPAC Subcommittee Hearing on**  
**“A Level Playing Field: College Athletes’ Rights to Their Name, Image,**  
**and Likeness”**  
**September 30, 2021**  
*As prepared for delivery*

Thank you, Madam Chair and for Chairman Pallone’s interest in this subject as well. I appreciated when Congressman Anthony Gonzalez testified before us on the topic of “Name Image Likeness” at the Member Day hearing. It was an important reminder this is an action this subcommittee can work together on.

I know today’s hearing is not on any specific legislative efforts, but I certainly appreciate the legislative commitment that Congressman Gonzalez and Congressman Cleaver have made here, as well as the efforts of Congresswoman Trahan and our subcommittee Chair Schakowsky. The Supreme Court has been clear on its rulings.

They’ve been clear on the fact that the NCAA, as well as the schools and their respective conferences, were overly restrictive on the ability of their athletes to seek compensation for their Name, Image, and Likeness. We should now work toward a national standard so the rules are clear for athletes, schools, and all those parties involved in that ecosystem of amateur athletics.

There's a lot of consensus on how these athletes may seek the rewards for their commitment to excellence. Take for instance the case of Cameron “Cami” March. I’m so pleased that Cami is testifying here today as part of this esteemed panel. Go Cougs!

Cami is a student at Washington State University, captain of the golf team, and an app developer. Her ability to compete would be in jeopardy if overly restrictive NIL rules were in place. That said, she and other young people still need a clear set of rules and understandable guidelines. This will ensure that her entrepreneurial spirit is rewarded and her passion to market

the app she developed is not hindered by a lack of uniform rules as she works to lead the Cougars to a successful golf season.

Now I know there are many commendable topics that may not deal directly with NIL per se but considering the pressure placed on these young student athletes, it is important that we consider their ability to seek counseling on financial and mental well-being. We have seen where athletes and students can be taken advantage of, and the extraordinary pressures they are under in this super connected world.

However, an overly prescriptive solution to this dilemma can have a detrimental impact on the athletes themselves, smaller schools with fewer resources, and those sports that are not generating revenue for their institutions. These are also important considerations to take into account so female athletes aren't disadvantaged or treated unfairly.

In fact, I could see small schools dropping programs altogether, which means that many of the scholarships will disappear, and so will the chance for first-generation and less privileged students to receive a college education. Every one of us takes great pride in the universities and colleges in our home states.

Our positions have provided us the opportunity of getting to know these athletes, and I'm sure that brings immense pride to all of you as it does to me. Let's not take that pride lightly as we consider solutions to give clear standards to colleges and universities. We should give amateur athletes every chance to succeed in life and in sports.

To help them win the future, I urge this committee not to get riddled with issues that have stalled our other efforts we have worked on—like privacy. Again, thank you to the witnesses for appearing before us today. I am very much looking forward to this discussion and how we take the next steps in legislating a set of rules that works for everyone. I yield back.