

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade Member Lori Trahan

Hearing on “Moving the Goalposts: How NIL is Reshaping College Athletics”

March 4, 2025

I thank the Ranking Member for yielding.

As a former D1 college volleyball player, the topic of today’s hearing hits home. But I want to begin by echoing the Ranking Members' concerns about the biggest threats facing colleges and universities today.

After all, I wasn’t just an athlete at Georgetown, I was a student. I was the first in my family to graduate from college, and I saw the transformative impact of higher ed. And I’m deeply troubled that the actions of the Trump Administration will jeopardize higher education and strip future generations of the opportunity we as athletes were afforded.

As this Committee has heard in previous hearings, athletes must be centered in any debates that will affect the future of college sports. Since I came to Congress, my work in this area has been guided by that simple principle: putting athletes first.

However, I’m concerned that the majority will put forward legislation that will roll back progress and restrict athletes - limiting their financial opportunity, denying them health and safety benefits, and failing to close the rampant Title IX loopholes robbing thousands of women across the country from athletic opportunities.

Instead, I implore my Republican colleagues to work with me on the legislative proposals I’ve put forward. When I wrote the Fair Play for Women Act, I did so with the knowledge that schools were systematically taking advantage of Title IX loopholes that deprive women athletes of roster spots. When I introduced the College Athlete Economic Freedom Act to establish a federal right for athletes to pursue NIL opportunities, I had in mind countless stories of athletes unable to fly their parents in to watch them play or going to bed hungry, all because they couldn’t make money off their own name and their schedules were too demanding to get a second job.

As this Committee and our colleagues in the Senate look to pass federal standards on NIL, revenue-sharing, or athletes’ employment rights we must meet this moment and prioritize the athletes, as opposed to enshrining the power structures that have limited their opportunities for decades.

Otherwise we risk jeopardizing the tremendous gains in recent years with one-sided proposals that provide much less than our nations’ athletes deserve.

Thank you Ranking Member, and I yield back.