

CAL STATE **TITANS** FULLERTON

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DEPARTMENT OF INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

March 10, 2025

The Honorable Lou Correa
U.S. House of Representatives
2082 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Derek Tran
U.S. House of Representative
1127 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Correa and Tran,

I am writing to you as the Director of Athletics at California State University, Fullerton, to express our concerns regarding the evolving landscape of collegiate athletics, particularly in relation to antitrust legislation, Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL), and the classification of student-athletes as employees. We appreciate your leadership and your commitment to the well-being of student-athletes, and we urge you to consider the broader implications of these issues on institutions like ours.

One of the most pressing concerns is the classification of student-athletes as employees. Such a shift would have devastating financial and structural consequences for intercollegiate athletics. The cost of workers' compensation alone - due to the inherent risks of injury - would force a significant number of institutions out of college athletics. While a handful of schools with revenues of \$150-\$200 million may be able to absorb these costs, the vast majority of the 1,100 NCAA-member institutions, including Cal State Fullerton, would not survive under such financial strain. The result would be a dramatic reduction in athletic opportunities for tens of thousands of student-athletes across the country.

Furthermore, the student-athletes we engage with do not want to be classified as employees. Collegiate athletics should remain a leadership laboratory - an environment that fosters personal development, teamwork, competition and overcoming adversity without the complications of an employer-employee relationship. Preserving this model is crucial to maintaining the educational and developmental benefits that college sports provide.

The unrestricted nature of the transfer portal has effectively created a free agency system in college athletics. Currently, student-athletes can transfer once a year within two "transfer windows," leading to significant instability in rosters and programs. While we respect a student's right to transfer, the reality is it's estimated nearly 50% of those who enter the portal do not find a new opportunity, and by current NCAA rules may lose their existing scholarship. This system, as it stands, does not serve the best interests of student-athletes or the institutions that support them.

In addition, we believe it is essential to establish a national framework for NIL with possible congressional oversight. While we fully support student-athletes' ability to profit from their name, image, and likeness, the current system lacks uniformity, leading to disparities and confusion across different programs and states.

Financial sustainability is another critical issue. Unlike some larger programs, Cal State Fullerton does not operate with an inflated athletics budget. We strive to provide meaningful experiences for our student-athletes while remaining fiscally responsible. Addressing financial disparities in college athletics may also need to be reviewed to promote a more balanced and equitable system.

We urge you to carefully consider these pressing issues as Congress evaluates potential legislative actions affecting college athletics. We welcome the opportunity to engage in further discussions and work collaboratively to develop solutions that protect student-athletes while ensuring the sustainability of collegiate sports. A well-regulated national structure would ensure fairness, consistency, and long-term sustainability for all stakeholders.

Thank you for your time and attention to this critical matter. We appreciate your dedication to student success and look forward to working together to support the future of college athletics.

Sincerely,


James Donovan (Mar 10, 2025 19:41 PDT)

Jim Donovan
Director of Athletics
California State University, Fullerton