

Opening Statement of United College Athletes Association (UCAA)

Executive Director Andrew Cooper

House Judiciary Committee

Hearing: Antitrust Law and the NCAA: Examining the Current Climate

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee. I am a former track athlete at Washington State University and UC Berkeley. I now serve as the executive director of the United College Athletes Association (UCAA).

The UCAA is a nonprofit that educates college athletes and unites their voices to advocate for safety mandates, academic protections, and economic rights; ultimately, to ensure the NCAA's business model is safe, fair, and sustainable for the players who generate the revenue.

Currently, 120 women's basketball players in the Big Ten and SEC have joined the UCAA to secure a voice in the NCAA's monopoly.¹

When I say the NCAA is a monopoly – that is not my opinion — that is the Supreme Court’s unanimous ruling in *Alston v NCAA* where the court found that the NCAA is a monopoly.²

As Justice Kavanaugh concurred “The NCAA’s business model would be flatly illegal in almost any other industry in America.... The NCAA is not above the law.”³

After failing in the Supreme Court, the NCAA is now begging Congress for an antitrust bailout to be above the law. Because they want to continue enriching themselves through this monopoly.⁴ In fact, according to the NCAA’s publicly available tax-returns as a nonprofit, in 2022 the NCAA paid its top 16 administrators an average salary of over \$800 thousand dollars a year.⁵

Over the last 40 years, our antitrust laws are the only force that have held the NCAA to be accountable: first in 1984,⁶ then in 1999 when coaches sued to end the NCAA’s cap on their salaries,⁷ again in 2014,⁸ and most recently in 2021.⁹ Before granting the NCAA an antitrust bailout, we should first ask ourselves: can we trust the NCAA?

Because history has shown the NCAA cannot be trusted. For example, in a 2013 wrongful death suit, the NCAA confessed in court, “The NCAA denies that it has a legal duty to protect [college] athletes.”¹⁰

Then in 2020, Senator Blackburn (R-TN) stated “The NCAA has failed when it comes to women in sports, sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual abuse... ‘how in the world are we going to be able to trust [the NCAA] to get this right?’”¹⁰

Senator Blackburn was referring to the sexual assault scandal at Baylor where the NCAA’s investigation ultimately concluded no NCAA rules were violated because rape is not an NCAA violation.¹² And just last year, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that only 7% of colleges even comply with Title IX.¹³

Even the NCAA’s most powerful colleges don’t trust the NCAA, which is why the Power Four conferences have formed a new LLC to independently police NIL and revenue sharing outside of the NCAA.¹⁴

If the NCAA cannot be trusted by parents to keep athletes safe and they cannot be trusted by their own conferences — how can Congress trust them with the unchecked power of an antitrust bailout?

One SEC athletic director even anonymously admitted “Let’s be honest, we’re all money laundering.”¹⁵

Given that reality, if the NCAA gets an antitrust bailout — how do we hold them accountable when they abuse that power? Furthermore, have we considered how Congress’s actions here could permanently politicize college sports forever?

That’s why Senator Kennedy (R-LA) told the NCAA President “You may regret asking Congress to intervene here. All of a sudden, you're going to be micromanaged.”¹⁶

Instead of giving the NCAA a bailout, Justice Kavanaugh proposed a solution “colleges and student athletes could potentially engage in collective bargaining (or seek some other negotiated agreement).”¹⁷

The solution is simple: partner with the players and give them an independent voice in this business. That’s exactly what the UCAA is doing — but the Big 10 and SEC are refusing to meet with the players.

Actions speak louder than words — and the NCAA’s actions prove they cannot be trusted with an exemption from the laws. I urge this committee to reject the NCAA’s request because it would erode our country’s fundamental antitrust laws, set dangerous precedent for other billion-dollar monopolies, and permanently politicize college sports.

Instead, this committee should force the NCAA to simply follow the same laws as every other business in our country. Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

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1. *The Washington Post*, “Women’s basketball players formed an advocacy group. They can’t get a meeting” (Jesse Dougherty, 2025)
 2. *NCAA v. Alston* (2021)
 3. *Harvard Law Review*, “NCAA v. Alston” (November 2021)
 4. *American Enterprise Institute*, “The NCAA Wants an Antitrust Exemption. Should They Get One?” (Nat Malkus, 2025)
 5. *NCAA IRS Form 990*, “Officers, Directors, Trustees, Key Employees, and Highest Compensated Employees” (Department of Treasury, 2023)
 6. *NCAA v. Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma* (1984)
 7. *Law v. NCAA* (1999)
 8. *O’Bannon v. NCAA* (2014)
 9. *NCAA v. Alston* (2021)
 10. *The Washington Times*, “In court filing, NCAA denies legal duty to protect athletes”, (Nathan Fenno, 2013)

11. *U.S. Senate, Subcommittee on Manufacturing, Trade, and Consumer Protection*, "Name, Image, and Likeness: The State of Intercollegiate Athlete Compensation", Statement of Senator Marsha Blackburn (February 11, 2020)
12. *Marquette Sports Law Review*, "Step One: Solving the NCAA Sexual Assault Problem" (Aaron Hernandez, 2021)
13. *Sportico*, "College Title IX Gender Equity Compliance Is a Failure, Feds Say" (Daniel Libit, 2024)
14. *Yahoo Sports*, "Monumental Shift: Power Conferences, not NCAA, to control policing athlete compensation" (Ross Dellenger, 2025)
15. *Sports Illustrated*, "Inside the NIL Battle That Is Splintering the SEC: 'We're All Money Laundering'" (Ross Dellenger, 2023)
16. *U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary*, "Name, Image, and Likeness, and the Future of College Sports", Statement of Senator John Kennedy (October 17, 2023)
17. *Harvard Law Review*, "NCAA v. Alston" (November, 2021)