



September 24, 2025

Dear Distinguished Members of Congress,

On behalf of the 18 member institutions of the Big Ten Conference, please accept this letter of strong support for the SCORE Act (H.R. 4312), which is the product of genuine bipartisan interest in helping to further modernize and bring long-term stability to the uniquely American treasure of college sports.

The Big Ten has nearly 130 years of history in providing opportunities and development to young people who go on to serve the United States and the world as citizens and leaders. Today, the member institutions of the Big Ten provide opportunities to over 14,000 men and women in 430 varsity sports, and the conference crowns champions in 28 sports—14 men's sports and 14 women's sports.

The Big Ten is proud of the support provided to its student-athletes, so is fully supportive of what would amount to the first federal Bill of Rights for student-athletes in the SCORE Act, which would include the following:

- medical care and nutritional support attendant to their participation in athletics;
- scholarship protections;
- protection from unscrupulous actors;
- a seat at the table for policy decisions that impact their lives;
- the opportunity to complete their degrees;
- the ability to control and monetize their own name, image, and likeness (NIL); and,
- sharing of revenue above and beyond the scholarships, health care, and nutritional benefits that historically have been provided.

By some metrics college sports is as healthy as it has ever been. For example, women's sports have reached new heights in popularity, as evidenced by the 95,000 people who attended a Nebraska volleyball match two seasons ago and the myriad records broken

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during Caitlin Clark's four years at Iowa. While high attendance and television ratings for men's and women's sports suggest that college sports may not be broken, it does need help. Organized sports do not work without a structure in which participants play by the same rules. In addition, while litigation and state actions may have ushered in needed change—a fact that must be acknowledged—they also set in motion an ongoing dismantling of the structure necessary to serve the underlying educational mission of college sports and the ability to have a uniform national framework required for fair competition.

The SCORE Act would stabilize the structure essential to the long-term health of college sports as described below.

- Student-athletes across the country would benefit from a permissive uniform standard for NIL, thereby eliminating confusion wrought by a patchwork of state-specific NIL laws.
- Financial benefits delivered through the landmark *House* settlement, notably the 22% revenue sharing amount that in addition to benefits such as scholarships, health care, and nutrition already provided equates to approximately a 50% revenue sharing environment would be enshrined into law along with the benefits and protections described above.
- Limited and precise preemption of action by individual states that goes no further than to prevent states motivated by local interests from rendering impossible what must be a national framework. This includes undercutting the most substantive elements of the *House* settlement—notably the 22% revenue sharing cap that constrains the gap between higher and lower resourced institutions and enforcement of the cap that without which the cap would be meaningless.
- Limited and precise liability protection that goes no further than allowing for the existence of rules that serve the educational mission of college sports, such as rules related to academic eligibility standards, transfer rules, and the limits on seasons of competition that are needed to allow for a perpetual cycle of one class of students moving on to become citizens and leaders as a new class comes in.
- Clarity that students are not employees by virtue of being varsity athletes, which not only affirms that the appropriate relationship between students and their

institutions in this educationally based model of athletics is not an employer-employee relationship. Moreover, for institutions that are not at the highest end of the resource spectrum, which comprise the overwhelming majority of the nearly 1,200 NCAA institutions, employment absolutely is a higher-education funding issue since the majority of such institutions sponsor varsity sports for enrollment purposes.

It is also important to acknowledge the unique ecosystem of college sports, which entails two sports—football and men’s basketball—serving as the primary source of support for all other sports. The benefits of this ecosystem include not just the opportunities that are provided to thousands of student-athletes in sports that do not typically generate positive net revenue, but also produce most of the United States Olympic pipeline. The Big Ten is especially proud of its contribution to that pipeline. In FY24 alone, the conference spent over \$680 million on sports other than football and basketball. In addition, the Big Ten produced 134 of the 592 members of Team USA, representing all 18 institutions in the 2024 Paris Olympics, of whom 67 were medalists.

As noted above, the Big Ten has a lengthy history and among its hallmarks are at least two pillars—the first is the notion that academic and athletic achievement are not mutually exclusive concepts, and the second is that a healthy college sports environment is one in which opportunities are provided to student-athletes in a broad range of sports. Having said that, we are at a crossroads in which the strength of those pillars is jeopardized by forces beyond our control. With the help of Congress, we can ensure those pillars endure for generations to come. Passing the SCORE Act will fortify the new paradigm of benefits and protections provided to student-athletes while also protecting the educational mission of college sports and the necessary ability to administer fair competition. We are eager to continue partnering with you and your staffs to further develop the legislative product that will most successfully serve the long-term health and best interests of college sports.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Petitti". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tony Petitti
Commissioner, Big Ten Conference

On behalf of:

University of Illinois
Indiana University
University of Iowa
University of Maryland
University of Michigan
Michigan State University
University of Minnesota
University of Nebraska
Northwestern University
Ohio State University
University of Oregon
Penn State University
Purdue University
Rutgers University
University of California, Los Angeles
University of Southern California
University of Washington
University of Wisconsin