



BIG 12 CONFERENCE

Statement of Support from the Big 12 Conference Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC)

Dear Esteemed Member of the House of Representatives from the State of Arizona,

My name is Brendan Belz, and I am a former Men's Lacrosse student-athlete at the University of Utah, representing the student-athletes of the Big 12 Conference at the Division I level. The Big 12 is proud to have a strong presence within your state through the inclusion of Arizona State University and the University of Arizona, institutions that are deeply woven into the cultural, educational, and athletic fabric of Arizona.

As the sole SAAC representative of the Big 12 Conference, representing over 9,500 student-athletes, I, along with student-athlete leaders from all 16 Big 12 institutions, write in strong support of the Student Compensation and Opportunity through Rights and Endorsements Act, also known as the SCORE Act, as a critical step forward in protecting student-athletes' rights, opportunities, and well-being.

Over the past five years, with the introduction of Name, Image, and Likeness, the landscape of college athletics has shifted dramatically. While NIL has brought important opportunities, the lack of uniformity across state lines has created confusion and inequity. Predatory agents have exploited inexperienced athletes, and debates about employment status have further complicated the environment. Too often, the lack of uniformity allows financial concerns to dominate the conversation, while the central mission of preparing student-athletes for a lifetime of success is overlooked.

The SCORE Act provides a solution by establishing consistency across state lines and ensuring fairness for all student-athletes. It includes essential safeguards that protect athletes from predatory practices, uphold their non-employment status, and prioritize their mental, physical, and educational well-being. College athletics should remain student-centered rather than financially-focused, reflecting the values upon which it was founded nearly 120 years ago. This legislation enhances opportunities while keeping the focus of college athletics on personal development, growth, and overall well-being.

Student-athletes, athletics directors, and university leaders are looking to you to preserve what makes college athletics meaningful and sets it apart from the professional ranks. We envision a system that values Olympic sports, prepares athletes for life after graduation, protects their overall well-being, and upholds the principles of fairness and opportunity. We believe in a model that recognizes participants as "student-athletes," not employees.

As a student-athlete whose collegiate journey shaped my character, resilience, and accountability, I urge you, on behalf of myself and thousands of Big 12 student-athletes, to vote in favor of the SCORE Act. This legislation will not only protect today's athletes but also safeguard the dreams and opportunities of future generations.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and commitment to strengthening college athletics at such a pivotal moment in its history.

Kind regards,

On behalf of the Big 12 Conference Student-Athlete Advisory Committee,

Brendan Belz
Big 12 NCAA Division I Representative
Former Men's Lacrosse Student-Athlete
University of Utah

Riley Burkey
Big 12 SAAC Chair
Women's Track/Field
University of Colorado Boulder

Thea Work
Big 12 SAAC Secretary
Women's Lacrosse
University of Cincinnati

Ava Sutphin
Women's Swim/Dive
University of Arizona

Keeley Cleland
Women's Lacrosse
Arizona State University

Kanalu Wong
Men's Track/Field & Cross Country
Baylor University

Lucy Kesler
Women's Soccer
Brigham Young University

Abby Schomers
Volleyball
University of Central Florida

Luke Dry
Men's Track/Field
University of Colorado Boulder

Katie Strotman
Big 12 SAAC Vice-Chair
Women's Track/Field
Iowa State University

Lauren Ann Barnes
Women's Track/Field
University of Cincinnati

Julian Savaiinanea
Football
University of Arizona

Daniel Miranda
Wrestling
Arizona State University

Rosanna Pugh
Women's Track/Field & Cross Country
Baylor University

Jack Burke
Men's Swim/Dive
Brigham Young University

Mahogany Chandler-Roberts
Women's Basketball
University of Central Florida

Lucas Morrison
Men's Track/Field
Iowa State University

Jenna Kerkman
Women's Swim/Dive
University of Houston

Ryan Johnston
Women's Swim/Dive
University of Kansas

Andra Mohler
Women's Soccer
Kansas State University

Jinah Mickens - Malik
Women's Track/Field
Oklahoma State University

Destin Drummond
Men's Track/Field
Texas Christian University

Makenna Smith
Women's Gymnastics
University of Utah

Scott Kean
Football
West Virginia University

Alana Johnson
Softball
Texas Tech University

Grant Levesque
Men's Track/Field
University of Houston

Taylor Davis
Football
University of Kansas

Will Anciaux
Football
Kansas State University

Cadence Kueker
Equestrian
Oklahoma State University

Riley Weigelt
Women's Volleyball
Texas Christian University

Davis Johnson
Men's Golf
University of Utah

Abigail Sullivan
Womens Swim/Dive
West Virginia University