



Statement of Support from the Empire 8 Student-Athlete Advisory Committee

Dear Representative Stefanik:

My name is Sebastian Knowles. I am a former swimming student-athlete and I serve as the Empire 8 National SAAC Representative, elected to represent the voice of thousands of Division III student-athletes across our 12 member institutions. Our conference is firmly rooted across the core of upstate New York, giving me the privilege of advocating for student-athletes throughout this diverse region.

I strongly support the Student Compensation and Opportunity through Rights and Endorsements Act (SCORE Act). Unlike Division I or II, Division III institutions do not offer athletic scholarships, and our model is built on the belief that student-athletes are students first. The SCORE Act protects this model while modernizing college athletics by preserving our non-employment status, establishing consistent NIL standards nationwide, and protecting student-athlete health, safety, and academic success.

Division III student-athletes do not view athletic participation as employment, we compete because it enriches our college experience. Simultaneously, our institutions are not built to operate under an employment model, financially or in mission. We are committed students who compete at a high level, and this legislation allows us to continue doing so in a stable, fair, and student-centered environment.

On behalf of Division III student-athletes from Alfred University, SUNY Brockport, Elmira College, SUNY Geneseo, Hartwick College, Houghton University, Keuka College, Nazareth University, SUNY Poly, Russell Sage College, St. John Fisher University, and Utica University, I urge your support for the SCORE Act. This bill ensures that student-athletes in your communities can continue to thrive as students foremost.

Thank you for your time and commitment to improving college athletics for all student-athletes.

Sebastian Knowles

Empire 8 National SAAC Representative

Former Men's Swimming Student-Athlete