



WELCOME

CONGRESS AND COLLEGE SPORTS: PENDING LEGISLATION AND LINGERING QUESTIONS

NCAA CONVENTION • JANUARY 14, 2026 • OXON HILL, MARYLAND



Knight Commission
On Intercollegiate Athletics

A PROJECT OF THE JOHN S. AND JAMES L. KNIGHT FOUNDATION



PAM BERNARD

Co-Chair, Knight Commission
VP & General Counsel, emerita,
Duke University

CONGRESS AND COLLEGE SPORTS: PENDING LEGISLATION AND LINGERING QUESTIONS



Knight Commission
On Intercollegiate Athletics

A PROJECT OF THE JOHN S. AND JAMES L. KNIGHT FOUNDATION





CURRENT INITIATIVES



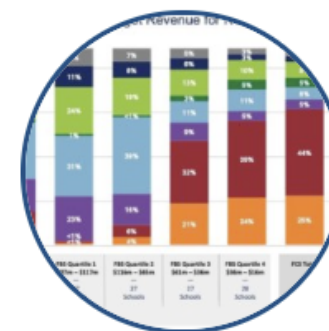
Division I Leaders Survey & Public Opinion Poll Results



C.A.R.E. Model Report and Resources



Transforming the NCAA D-I Model Series



Finances of College Sports



knightcommission.org





Why is Congress involved?

College sports is a public trust.

Educational opportunities must be preserved.



DI LEADERS SURVEY FINDINGS (OCTOBER 2025)



Importance of educational mission

98% Important for athletes to be enrolled full-time and taking classes

99% Important for athletes to graduate



CORE ISSUES ADDRESSED IN FEDERAL LEGISLATION

- A. Athlete compensation
- B. Athlete eligibility
- C. Constant litigation
- D. Athlete employment classification
- E. Women's and collegiate Olympic sports opportunities



ACTIVE LEGISLATION ON COLLEGE SPORTS

HOUSE BILLS

SCORE

**Student Compensation and Opportunity
through Rights and Endorsements**

CARA

College Athletics Reform Act



ACTIVE LEGISLATION ON COLLEGE SPORTS

SENATE BILLS

SAFE
Student Athlete Fairness and
Enforcement

HUSTLE
Helping Undergraduate Students Thrive
with Long-Term Earnings



ROB MANGAS

Shareholder,
Government Law & Policy Group
Greenberg Taurig, LLP

CONGRESS AND COLLEGE SPORTS: PENDING LEGISLATION AND LINGERING QUESTIONS



Knight Commission
On Intercollegiate Athletics

A PROJECT OF THE JOHN S. AND JAMES L. KNIGHT FOUNDATION

Status of Major College Sports Legislation

(as of January 12, 2026)



SCORE Act (H.R. 4312)

- Introduced July 10th; referred to two committees; 22 cosponsors (16 R, 6 D)
- July 23rd: reported by Energy and Commerce Committee, 30-23 (R 30-0; D 0-23)
- July 23rd: reported by Education and Workforce Committee, 18-17 (R 18-1; D 0-16)
- December 2nd: Rule for floor debate passed 210-209 (R 210-3; D 0-206)

SAFE Act (S. 2932)

- Introduced September 29th; referred to Commerce Committee; 3 cosponsors (3 D)

CARA (H.R. 6350)

- Introduced December 2nd; referred to three committees; 25 cosponsors (25 D)

HUSTLE Act (S. 3378)

- Introduced December 4th; referred to Finance Committee; 3 cosponsors (2 R, 1 D)



GABE FELDMAN



DAVID L. FOSTER



AMY PRIVETTE PERKO



PEYTON BARISH

CONGRESS AND COLLEGE SPORTS: PENDING LEGISLATION AND LINGERING QUESTIONS



Knight Commission
On Intercollegiate Athletics

A PROJECT OF THE JOHN S. AND JAMES L. KNIGHT FOUNDATION



ATHLETE AGENT REGULATION



ATHLETE AGENT REGULATION

CARA

SCORE*

SAFE

HUSTLE

All four bills require:

- System for agent registration and cap on agent fees
- Sports governing body or federal government to set up the system
- Cap on agent fees
(*In **SCORE**, agent cap applies only to athlete-institution deals.)



CONGRESS AND COLLEGE SPORTS: PENDING LEGISLATION AND LINGERING QUESTIONS

NCAA CONVENTION • JANUARY 14, 2026 • OXON HILL, MARYLAND



Knight Commission
On Intercollegiate Athletics

A PROJECT OF THE JOHN S. AND JAMES L. KNIGHT FOUNDATION



ATHLETE COMPENSATION AND NON-EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATION



ATHLETE COMPENSATION

CARA

SCORE

SAFE

Federal NIL Standard:

**College athletes have a right to earn
NIL compensation**



ATHLETE COMPENSATION

THIRD-PARTY NIL

DIFFERENCES IN REGULATORY APPROACHES

- Pre-emption of state laws
- Fair-market value and valid business purpose
- Reporting requirements
- Restrictions on deals that:
 - Use institutional intellectual property
 - Conflict with institutional contracts
 - Violate institution code of conduct



ATHLETE COMPENSATION

INSTITUTIONAL AND ATHLETE REVENUE SHARING CAPS

CARA

SCORE*

SAFE

- Institutional direct compensation above and beyond grant-in-aid and cost-of-attendance payments (consistent with *House*)
- ***SCORE**: minimum institutional athlete revenue-sharing cap (different than *House*)



NON-EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATION

SHOULD ATHLETES BE CONSIDERED EMPLOYEES?

SCORE

Strictly prohibited

**SAFE
CARA**

Silent on employee classification

CARA

Creates a commission to evaluate collective bargaining without employment status



CONGRESS AND COLLEGE SPORTS: PENDING LEGISLATION AND LINGERING QUESTIONS

NCAA CONVENTION • JANUARY 14, 2026 • OXON HILL, MARYLAND



Knight Commission
On Intercollegiate Athletics

A PROJECT OF THE JOHN S. AND JAMES L. KNIGHT FOUNDATION



DI LEADERS SURVEY FINDINGS (October 2025)

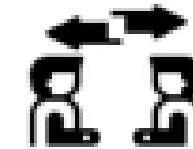


TRANSFER RULES



Impact of the transfer portal on Division I

86% Negative
8% Positive
7% Neither positive nor negative



Allowing athletes to transfer between schools as often as they choose with immediate eligibility to compete and no penalty

84% Oppose
11% Support
4% Neither support nor oppose



ATHLETE ELIGIBILITY

TRANSFER RULES

SCORE

- College sports governing body sets transfer rules
- Athletes can transfer with immediate eligibility at least once



ATHLETE ELIGIBILITY

TRANSFER RULES

SAFE

- Enshrines transfer rules into federal law
- Transfer twice with immediate eligibility
- Additional transfers under certain conditions

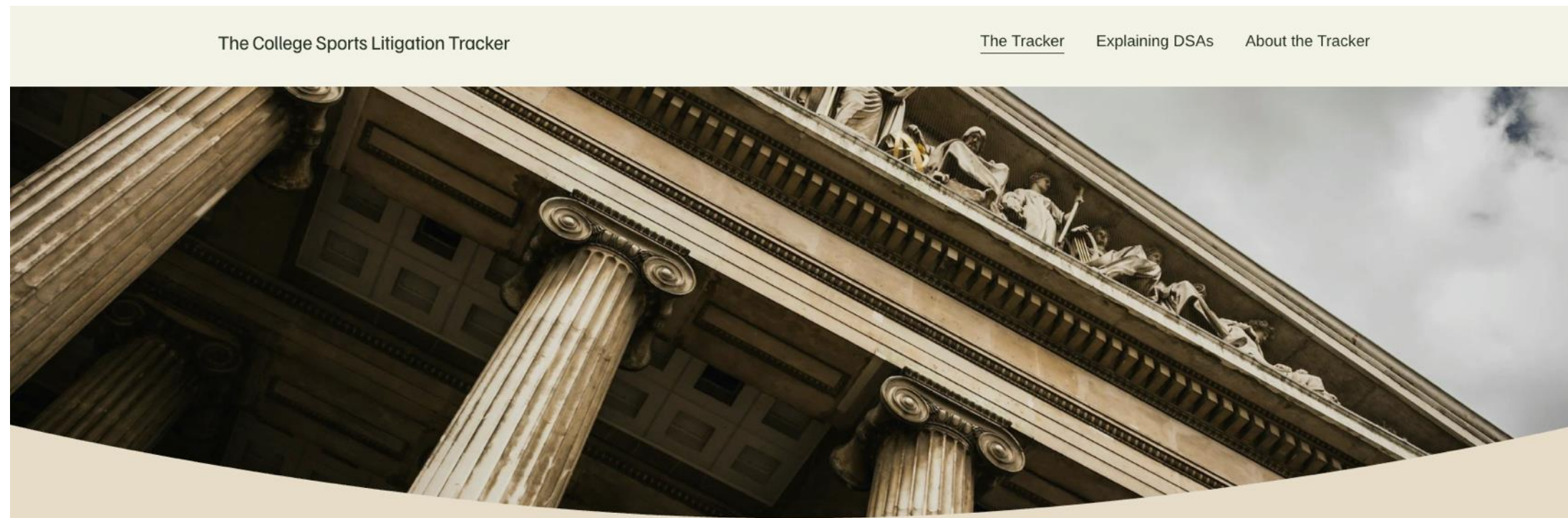
CARA

- Tasks its Commission to study potential solutions



ATHLETE ELIGIBILITY

SEASONS OF ELIGIBILITY



19 current active lawsuits challenging NCAA's framework allowing 5 years to complete 4 seasons of collegiate eligibility



ATHLETE ELIGIBILITY

SEASONS OF ELIGIBILITY

CARA

SCORE*

SAFE

- Not addressed in the 3 comprehensive bills
- *NCAA's call for broad antitrust exemption enabling it to enforce its own rules is envisioned in **SCORE**.



CONGRESS AND COLLEGE SPORTS: PENDING LEGISLATION AND LINGERING QUESTIONS

NCAA CONVENTION • JANUARY 14, 2026 • OXON HILL, MARYLAND



Knight Commission
On Intercollegiate Athletics

A PROJECT OF THE JOHN S. AND JAMES L. KNIGHT FOUNDATION



OPPORTUNITY



OPPORTUNITY

SCORE

Requires a minimum of 16 varsity sports



OPPORTUNITY

CARA

Provisions aimed at increasing revenue to support women's and collegiate Olympic sports

- Limited antitrust exemption to expand the Sports Broadcasting Act resulting in potential increased revenue

SAFE

SAFE

Establishes new committee responsible for revenue distribution to maintain scholarship and roster slots at 2023-24 levels



CONGRESS AND COLLEGE SPORTS: PENDING LEGISLATION AND LINGERING QUESTIONS

NCAA CONVENTION • JANUARY 14, 2026 • OXON HILL, MARYLAND



Knight Commission
On Intercollegiate Athletics

A PROJECT OF THE JOHN S. AND JAMES L. KNIGHT FOUNDATION



THANK YOU

FOR SESSION RESOURCES & MORE INFORMATION
visit *knightcommission.org*



Knight Commission
On Intercollegiate Athletics
A PROJECT OF THE JOHN S. AND JAMES L. KNIGHT FOUNDATION