



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

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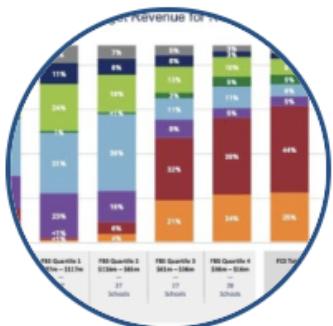
Division I Leaders Survey & Public Opinion Poll Results



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)



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ELON
UNIVERSITY

Elon University
Poll

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,
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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

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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.)



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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



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DI LEADERS SURVEY FINDINGS (October 2025)



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ELON
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TRANSFER RULES

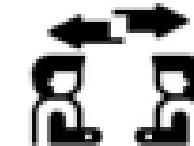


Impact of the transfer portal on Division I

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

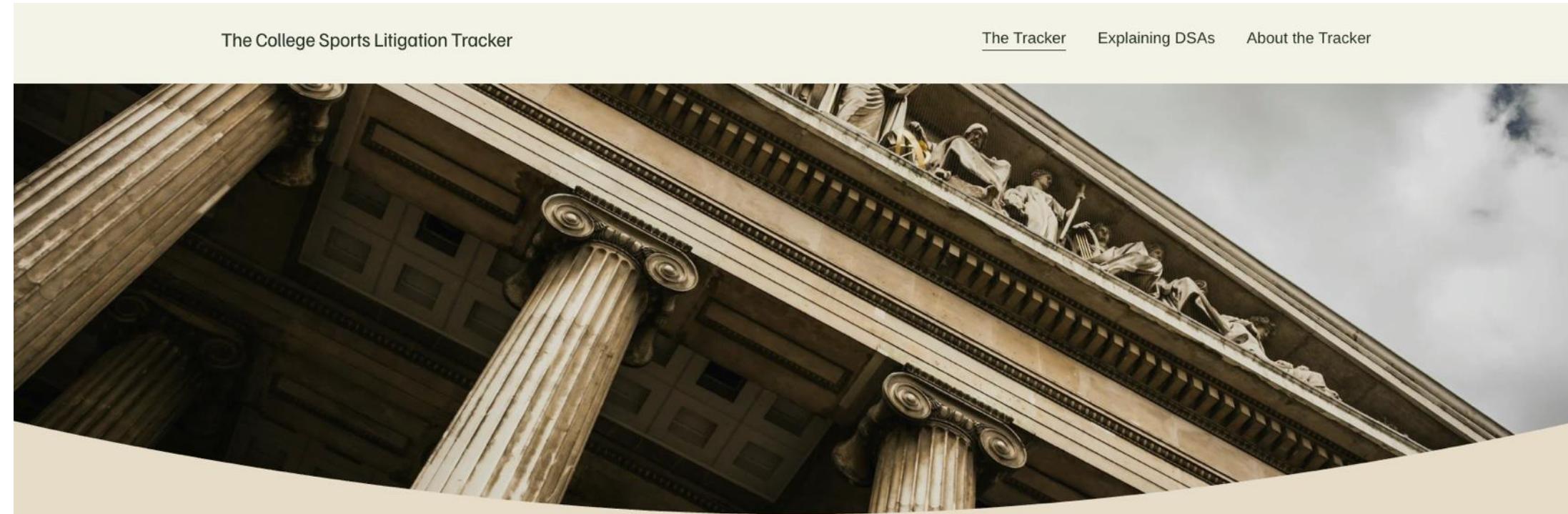
CARA

- Tasks its Commission to study potential solutions



ATHLETE ELIGIBILITY

SEASONS OF ELIGIBILITY



The College Sports Litigation Tracker

[The Tracker](#)

[Explaining DSAs](#)

[About the Tracker](#)

**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**.



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OPPORTUNITY



OPPORTUNITY

SCORE

Requires a minimum of 16 varsity sports



OPPORTUNITY

CARA

SAFE

SAFE

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

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



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