

# Senators to Introduce Additional Federal Legislation Regarding Collegiate Student-Athletes

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For the second time in a little more than a month, Connecticut Senator Richard Blumenthal and New Jersey Senator Cory Booker have announced plans to introduce additional federal legislation impacting collegiate student-athletes “in the coming months.”

This follows the Senators’ previous introduction of the “College Athlete Pandemic Safety Act,” which would eliminate the ability of colleges and universities to use liability waivers as a basis for student-athletes to return to campus and resume training activities.

The framework of the proposed “**College Athletes Bill of Rights**” legislation was announced by Booker and Blumenthal, and they were joined by eight other U.S. Senators, including Bernie Sanders and Kamala Harris. The proposed legislation would cover the following specific areas:

**Fair and Equitable Compensation**– The proposed bill would allow student-athletes to market their name, image, and likeness (NIL) as an individual and as a member of a group of student-athletes with minimal restrictions. It would authorize athletes to enter into revenue-sharing agreements with athletic associations, conferences and member schools. Without providing any specificity, the Senators stated the goal of the bill is to allow student-athletes to retain authority and have a voice in determining and establishing fair NIL agreements.

**Development of Health, Safety and Wellness Standards**– The bill would mandate the development and aggressive enforcement of health, safety, and wellness standards to ensure college athletes are kept healthy and protected from undue risk related to their participation in sports and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, the Senators intend their legislation to make coaches “accountable for dangerous and abusive decision-making.”

**Improve Educational Opportunities-** The proposal intends to provide student-athletes with lifetime scholarships to allow them to complete their degrees.

**Comprehensive Healthcare Coverage-** Schools would be required to provide healthcare coverage and support with regard to sport-related injuries. The general outline of the legislation states that increased **financial assistance will be mandated to assist current and former college athletes with medical bills** and out-of-pocket expenses from sport-related injuries and illnesses from COVID-19.

**University Financial Disclosure Requirements-** The bill would require all schools to provide a detailed annual report that would publicly release the total sources of athletic department revenues and expenditures, including compensation for athletic department personnel and booster donations, as well as mandatory reporting on the number of hours all student-athletes commit to athletic activities in their individual sports.

**Freedom of University Choice-** The Senators proposed bill would eliminate restrictions and penalties that currently prevent college athletes from attending the institution of their choice,

**including the removal of current penalties associated with transferring schools and student movement following their execution of National Letters of Intent.**

**Creation of Oversight Commission-** Finally, the proposed legislation would create a commission of current and former athletes, policy experts, as well as academic and administration officials to guarantee student-athletes an opportunity to be involved in the rules governing a college sports oversight panel.

Several Senators involved in the proposed legislation commented on their support for the bill. Senator Booker stated, “The NCAA has failed generations of young men and women even when it comes to their most basic responsibility—keeping the athletes under their charge healthy and safe.” **Senator Bernie Sanders, advocating collective bargaining rights for student-athletes who have not been determined to be employees by the National Labor Relations Board, commented on his support, “These athletes are workers. That means safe working conditions, health care, collective bargaining rights, and fair wages for their labor.”**

If introduced, this bill will join Senator Marco Rubio's bill, the Fairness in Collegiate Athletics Act, which was introduced in June. That bill would require the NCAA to implement rules to allow student-athletes to market their name, image, and likeness and receive compensation for their use without any potential impact to their student-athlete status.

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