

Young Democrats of Maryland Caucus of Color
Testimony for HB125
House Appropriations Committee

POSITION: FAVORABLE

On behalf of the Young Democrats of Maryland Caucus of Color, we would like to thank Delegate Lierman for introducing this bill. We would also like to extend appreciation to the House Appropriations Committee for the opportunity to explain how the measures in this bill would positively impact student-athletes across the State.

Unfortunate tragedies among student-athletes make it blatantly obvious that there is a need for reform in order to protect current and future student-athletes. Since 2000, over 30 NCAA football players have died due to conditions developed during NCAA-sanctioned activities. By establishing a bill of rights we are essentially helping to ensure student wellbeing through different avenues such as protection of scholarships, preventing injuries, allowing income, etc.

HB125 is following the steps of 20+ other states with similar proposals to ensure students at public universities in Maryland are not prohibited from using their name or image to earn an income as well as are given a bill of rights to protect their wellbeing. 80% of student-athletes are below the federal poverty line, and by allowing students to have the same rights to an income as their peers they would be able to become more financially stable.

Additionally, minorities and people of color are disproportionately affected by such unjust policies as 56% of Division I men's basketball players and 47% of Division I women's basketball players are African American. On top of that 48% of Division I football players are African American. African Americans and students of color are also more likely to be first-generation students, meaning many of these student athletes are the first in their family to attain higher education. This makes it even more important that these students have access to all possibilities available to them.

The policies laid out in HB125 have the potential to ensure safety as well as enable equity for student-athletes. By protecting students' scholarships, preventing injuries, and allowing them to attain an income. As representatives of the Young Democrats of Maryland Caucus of Color, we urge you to vote yes on HB125.

Sincerely,

Young Democrats of Maryland, Caucus of Color