

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 533
February 18, 2020 * Appropriations Committee

Greetings Chairwoman McIntosh & Members of the Committees:

My Name is Elvis Dannah and I'm a former football student-athlete at the University of Maryland from 2013-2015 seasons . I finished up my undergrad in 2016 and my graduate studies in 2017 from the University of Maryland . I am currently a part time student in the Robert H Smith MBA program. I also work as the African Diaspora Liaison in the Prince George's County Executive Office however ; my testimony is separate as the Prince Georges County Executive has not taken a position on HB533.

I am in Support of HB533 The Jordan McNair Safe and Fair Play Act because it furthers the discussion on students athletes rights, health, and safety. It also challenges the NCAA to reform its measures.

This legislation also establishes a Council on the fair treatment of Student-Athlete. This council will look into the health and safety of current and former in the state of Maryland. It's going to take NCAA representatives, government officials, conference leaders, University officials, and supporters of student-athletes to bring forth this change in the State of Maryland.

The Council on the fair treatment of student athletes will review :

- Benefits such as rehabilitation & mental health resources that helps former student athletes who suffer serious injuries at the University of Maryland (long-or short-term care for life-impacting physical injuries.
- NCAA regulations on transfer rules
- Educational opportunities
- Disciplinary process making sure student-athletes have rights to fair and unbiased decisions at Universities.

This legislation seeks to prompt the NCAA to reform its measures on amateurism for student-athletes. The modern student athlete has evolved, some being in the public eye at a very young age all the way to college and as a professional in some cases . States along with NCAA should allow them access to greater benefits using their brand as amateur athlete while

in college. As we know, most student athletes will not go on to get paid professionally through sports. Athletes being allowed to leverage and get compensated for their brand while in college can help guide other professional careers that may not be sports.

Passing this legislation will prompt the NCAA, its member conferences, and institutions to standardize how it can work uniformly to regulate student-athletes using their name, image, and likeness at all levels of play. Similar to California, (NY, FL, Washington, Colorado, South Carolina , Illinois) many other states will introduce legislation to debate this longstanding approval. An athlete name, image, and likeness is their brand and the NCAA has generated billions of dollars of revenue every year off collegiate athletes and their brand.

The NCAA Board of Governors is currently exploring changes to allow student athletes to benefit from their name, image, and likeness. States passing similar legislation will spur the NCAA to make a decision sooner rather than later

I agree it is important thoroughly think through how it would work but it shouldn't discourage decisions makers from doing what's right from student athletes.

We ask for a favorable report on HB 533. Thank you

Sincerely,

Elvis Dannah

elvis.dannah@gmail.com / 240-495-0424