Senate Passes Protect College Sports Act 77-22: What the Vote Would Mean for NIL Compliance, Transfers, and Eligibility

The Senate passed the Protect College Sports Act 77–22, advancing federal standards for NIL agreements, transfers, eligibility, agent fees and compliance.



A Senate-passed bill could establish new federal standards for NIL, transfers and eligibility—but it has not become law.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, October 6, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The United States Senate has passed the Protect College Sports Act (S. 4668) by a bipartisan vote of 77-22, advancing the first comprehensive federal framework for college athletics to the House of Representatives. K Altman Law, a national education and student defense law firm, is reviewing the legislation and its potential compliance implications for student-athletes, families, colleges, and athletics departments. You can read about it here.

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>
> *Candice K. Lapham*

What the Senate Approved

According to reporting on the September 28 vote, the bill was negotiated by Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Ted Cruz and Ranking Member Maria Cantwell, with cosponsors Senators Eric Schmitt and Chris Coons. As reported, the legislation would codify the 2025 House v. NCAA settlement, set national standards for name, image, and likeness agreements, and grant limited antitrust protection allowing the NCAA to enforce rules on eligibility, transfers, and compensation. Reporting further indicates the bill would permit one penalty-free transfer, establish a five-year eligibility framework, require athlete agents to register, cap agent fees at five percent, require disclosure of qualifying NIL agreements, and impose minimum sport-offering and roster requirements intended to protect women's and Olympic sports.

Compliance Obligations That Would Change If the Bill Becomes Law

If enacted in its current form, the legislation would shift much of college athletics compliance from a patchwork of state NIL statutes and association bylaws to a single federal structure. Athletics departments would face new reporting, disclosure, and oversight duties. Student-athletes and families would encounter registered-agent requirements, capped agent fees, and documented NIL reporting thresholds. Institutions would also need to align internal policies, contract review procedures, and eligibility determinations with federal standards rather than state-by-state rules.



Candice Lapham, NIL/Litigation Attorney at K Altman Law

What Remains Unresolved

The bill has not become law. It now moves to the House of Representatives, which, according to reporting, is not scheduled to return until after the November elections, and the measure would need to pass both chambers before the current Congress ends. Reporting also indicates the Senate bill does not resolve whether college athletes are employees, and that some organizations, including the NAACP, the AFL-CIO, and the Congressional Black Caucus, have opposed the measure. Nothing in the bill's current posture changes existing obligations today.

Spokesperson Comment

"Federal standards would give student-athletes and institutions something the current system has lacked, which is a predictable set of rules," said Candice Lapham, NIL Attorney at K Altman Law. "Whatever the final outcome in the House, athletes and families should be reading their agreements carefully, understanding disclosure requirements, and asking questions before signing anything. Contract literacy and documentation discipline protect eligibility far more reliably than assumptions do."

What Student-Athletes and Families Should Do Now

- Keep complete copies of every NIL agreement, amendment, payment record, and communication with agents, collectives, and brand partners.
- Verify agent credentials and confirm what fees, terms, duration, and termination rights a written agreement actually contains.
- Confirm current institutional, conference, and state reporting requirements, because existing rules remain in effect unless and until federal legislation is enacted.

 Review how a transfer decision may interact with eligibility timelines, scholarship terms, and any retention or revenue-sharing arrangements.
 Ask the athletics compliance office to confirm requirements in writing before entering into new agreements.

About K Altman Law
K Altman Law is a national law firm representing students, families, educators, and professionals in education law matters, including student defense, special education, Title IX and civil rights, academic misconduct, professional licensing, and college athletics compliance issues. The firm advises clients across the country and works with local counsel where required.

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