

The University of Maryland Student Government Association

Testimony for SB518

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, Wednesday, February 12th, 2020

Higher Education – Council on the Fair Treatment of Student Athletes (Jordan McNair Safe and Fair Play Act)

POSITION: FAVORABLE

On behalf of the University of Maryland Student Government Association and University of Maryland students, we would like to thank Senator Ready for introducing this bill. We would also like to thank the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee for the opportunity to explain how the measures in this bill would positively impact student athletes at UMD and across the state of Maryland.

Unfortunate events over the past two years, namely the Jordan McNair tragedy, have made it evident that our student athletes are vulnerable in the current state of affairs. Any and all vulnerable student populations deserve their safety and wellbeing to be ensured first and foremost. Student athletes are no exception. By establishing the Commission on the Fair Treatment of Student Athletes, this bill begins the process of ensuring the safety and wellbeing of student athletes. Coming from a group of experts, students, and parents, the recommendations of the commission will come from a well-rounded perspective of the student athlete experience.

Additionally, this bill will have Maryland follow in the footsteps of California and over twenty other states by removing the current prohibition on student athletes from generating income from third parties based on their name, image, or likeness. Currently, all college students are allowed to use their talents and skills to earn a living while in college - except student athletes. By removing this prohibition, student athletes will finally have the same ability as their collegiate peers to earn an income with the talent and skills they accrue during their college careers. Allowing student athletes to earn income from third parties for the use of their name, image, or likeness also works towards ensuring their safety and wellbeing. Even with a full athletic scholarship, over 80% of student athletes live below the federal poverty line. Generating income from their name, image, or likeness will allow some of these student athletes to improve their current dire financial situations.

The policies laid out in SB518 have the potential to ensure the safety and wellbeing of student athletes while also allowing them to to earn a living based on their work in college just as any other student may do. As representatives of the University of Maryland Student Government Association, we ask you to vote yes on SB518.

Sincerely,



Ireland Lesley
Student Body President



Samay Singh Kindra
Director of Government Affairs