

## Testimony Before Connecticut Legislature (2011)

Good morning everyone. My name is Allen Sack. I am a professor in the College of Business at the University of New Haven. First, I would like to thank Senator Bye, Representative Willis and the entire Higher Education Committee for giving me this opportunity to present my views on this proposed legislation. Thanks also to Representative Pat Dillon for moving this important legislation along.

When I played college football at the University of Notre Dame in the 1960s, I received a four-year athletic scholarship that could not be canceled or reduced if I were injured or my athletic performance were deemed to be below my coach's expectations. Since that time, rules regarding athletic scholarships have changed dramatically. In 1973, the NCAA made athletic scholarships renewable on a year-to-year basis. Four-year scholarships are a thing of the past.

Current NCAA rules clearly state that athletic aid cannot be reduced or cancelled during *the one-year period of the award* on the basis of athletic ability or injury. But the rules are murky when it comes to conditions for the renewal and non-renewal of the scholarship in the subsequent year. Some universities renew scholarships for four years as long as athletes continue playing and adhere to team rules. Others cancel scholarships for poor athletic performance or for injury.

Reasonable people can disagree on which policy is best for their institution. But prospective athletes and their parents must know with certainty the conditions under which scholarships can be reduced or cancelled while pursuing their degree. Selecting which college to attend can be difficult. Knowing the conditions for the yearly renewal or non-renewal of financial aid is absolutely essential for making a well informed decision.

The Connecticut Student-Athletes Right to Know Act would require post-secondary institutions to publicly disclose their policy regarding the renewal and non-renewal of athletic scholarships, including circumstances in which an athlete in good academic standing suffers a sports-related injury, there is a coaching change, or athletic performance is deemed to be below expectations.

We owe this kind of honesty to all students, including the athletes who enhance the quality of student life on Connecticut's college campuses and provide a point of emotional attachment for Connecticut citizens to their colleges and universities.