

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2025 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 647

By Senator Grady

[Introduced March 3, 2025; referred
to the Committee on Education]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new article,
2 designated §18B-22-1, §18B-22-2, §18B-22-3, §18B-22-4, §18B-22-5, and §18B-22-6,
3 relating to name, image, or likeness in intercollegiate athletics; defining terms; authorizing
4 institutions of higher education to facilitate and enter into agreements relating to a student-
5 athlete's name, image, or likeness; limiting the ability of athletic associations, athletic
6 conferences, or other similarly situated oversight or regulatory organizations to regulate an
7 institution or a student-athlete with respect to activities for compensation involving a
8 student-athlete name, image, or likeness; limiting the purposes for which student-athletes
9 may earn compensation for the use of name, image, or likeness; and prohibiting
10 institutions of higher education from compensating a student-athlete for the use of name,
11 image, and likeness from appropriations.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 22. NAME, IMAGE, OR LIKENESS IN INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS.

§18B-22-1. Definitions.

1 For purposes of this article:

2 "Athlete agent" means an individual who holds a valid certificate of registration as an
3 athlete agent issued pursuant to §30-39-5 of this code.

4 "Attorney" means an attorney licensed to practice law in the state of West Virginia.

5 "Compensation" means any type of remuneration or anything of value: *Provided, That*
6 compensation does not include any (i) scholarship provided to a student-athlete that covers some
7 or all of the cost of attendance at an institution at which the student-athlete is enrolled or (ii) benefit
8 a student-athlete may receive in accordance with the rules of the relevant athletic association or
9 conference.

10 "Institution" means a state institution of higher education as defined in §18B-1-2 of this
11 code.

12 "Institutional marks" means the name, logo, trademarks, mascot, unique colors,

13 copyrights, and other defining insignia of an institution.

14 "Intercollegiate athletics" means programs at an institution for sports played at the
15 collegiate level for which eligibility requirements for participation by a student-athlete are
16 established by a national association for the promotion or regulation of college athletics.

17 "Name, image, or likeness" means a student-athlete's name, image, or likeness, including
18 but not limited to caricature, nicknames, pseudonyms, voice, live or recorded performances,
19 photographs, videos, audio recordings, signatures, quotations, biographical data or information
20 and any other personal characteristics or physical or vocal likenesses of student-athlete; any and
21 all intellectual property rights owned by or on behalf of student-athlete relating to, based on or
22 derived from any of the foregoing; any and all other materials or indicia of origin relating to the
23 student-athlete or any of the foregoing, including services and activities of the student-athlete
24 related to the use of the foregoing rights of the student-athlete.

25 "Official team activities" means all games, practices, exhibitions, scrimmages, team
26 appearances, team photograph sessions, sports campus sponsored by the institution, and other
27 team-organized activities, including, but not limited to, individual photograph sessions, news
28 media interviews, and other related activities as specified by the institution.

29 "Student-athlete" means an individual enrolled at an institution who participates in
30 intercollegiate athletics.

§18B-22-2. Authority of institutions relating to name, image, and likeness.

1 (a) Except as provided in this article, institutions are authorized to (1) enter into
2 agreements providing for the compensation of student-athletes for the use of the student-athlete's
3 name, image, or likeness; (2) share a portion of the revenues generated by an intercollegiate
4 athletic department with the student-athlete; (3) may condition such compensation based on terms
5 and conditions established by the institution, including provisions limiting the ability of the student-
6 athlete to earn compensation from other persons or entities, including, but not limited to, prohibited
7 endorsements, conflicting endorsements, and activities during official team activities and a

8 requirement that the student-athlete disclose any similar agreements with other persons or
9 entities; and (4) identify, create, negotiate, facilitate, support, engage with, or otherwise assist a
10 student-athlete with respect to a name, image, or likeness opportunity: *Provided*, That institutions
11 shall not use any moneys appropriated by the Legislature to compensate a student-athlete for the
12 student-athlete's name, image, or likeness; endorsement, or revenue sharing activities.

13 (b) Subject to the authority in subsection (a) of this section, student-athletes are authorized
14 to earn compensation for the student-athlete's name, image, or likeness; endorsement; or related
15 activity, including directly from the institution where the student-athlete is enrolled, and the
16 student-athlete may retain an athlete agent or legal representation in connection with issues
17 related to name, image, or likeness; endorsement; and related activity.

§18B-22-3. Limitations on the authority of athletics associations, athletic conferences, or other organizations over intercollegiate athletics.

1 (a) As a result of a student-athlete engaging in activities authorized by this article, no
2 institution, athletic association, athletic conference, or other organization with authority over
3 intercollegiate athletics may:

4 (1) Open an investigation, penalize, suspend, take other adverse action, or declare a
5 student-athlete ineligible from intercollegiate athletic competition; or

6 (2) Reduce, cancel, revoke, or not renew an athletic scholarship for a student-athlete.

7 (b) As a result of a student-athlete or an institution, an employee of an institution, an
8 authorized agent of an institution, or an entity controlled by an institution engaging in activities
9 authorized by this article, no athletic association, athletic conference, or other organization with
10 authority over intercollegiate athletics may open an investigation, penalize, suspend, or take other
11 adverse action against any such person, institution, or entities for engaging in such activities.

§18B-22-4. Limitations on the ability to earn compensation for the use of name, image, and likeness.

1 No student-athlete shall earn compensation for the use of the student-athlete's name,

image, or likeness in connection with any of the following:

(1) Alcohol and alcoholic beverages;

(2) Adult entertainment;

(3) Cannabis, cannabinoids, cannabidiol, or other derivatives, not including hemp or hemp products;

(4) Controlled substances, as defined in §60A-1-101 of this code;

(5) Performance enhancing drugs or substances such as steroids or human growth hormone;

(6) Drug paraphernalia, as defined in §47-19-3 of this code;

(7) Tobacco, tobacco products, alternative nicotine products, nicotine vapor products, and similar products and devices; or

(8) Casinos or gambling, including sports betting.

§18B-22-5. Employment status of student-athletes.

Nothing in this article shall be construed to qualify a student-athlete as an employee of an institution because the student-athlete engages in name, image, or likeness opportunities.

§18B-22-6. Causes of action.

(a) Any student-athlete who is aggrieved by any action of an institution or agent thereof, athletic association, athletic conference, or other organization with authority over intercollegiate athletics in violation of any provision of this section may bring an action for injunctive relief.

(b) No institution, employee of an institution, authorized agent of an institution, or an entity controlled by an institution, shall be liable for any damages to a student-athlete's ability to earn compensation for the use of the student-athlete's name, image, or likeness resulting from decisions and actions routinely taken in the course of intercollegiate athletics.

(c) Any institution, employee of an institution, authorized agent of an institution, or entity controlled by an institution that is subjected to any actual or threatened complaint, investigation, penalty, or other adverse action of an athletic association, athletic conference, or other

- 11 organization with authority over intercollegiate athletics for engaging in activities permitted under
12 this section may bring an action to recover actual damages and reasonable attorney fees and may
13 seek injunctive relief and any other remedy available at law or in equity.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to provide rights, responsibilities, authorities and limitations relating to the name, image, and likeness of an individual who is participating as a student-athlete in an institution of higher education.

This article is new, therefore, strike-throughs and underscoring have been omitted; all language is new.