



**Proponent Written Testimony
Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee
Ohio House Bill 184**

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June 18, 2025

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of House Bill 184 on behalf of Fanatics, a global digital sports platform. Our vision is to serve sports fans around the world across their digital sports journeys. We aim to ignite the passions for global sports fans by offering an integrated, personalized, and immersive fan experience across our various businesses, which include Fanatics Commerce and Fanatics Collectibles.

Through our Commerce business, we serve as a leading designer, manufacturer, and seller of licensed fan gear, jerseys, lifestyle and streetwear products, headwear, and hardgoods.

Fanatics Collectibles serves as a leading licensee, designer, producer, manufacturer and seller of physical and digital trading cards, sports memorabilia, and other digital assets for entertainment and sports properties globally.

Across our businesses, Fanatics is party to significant licensing agreements with major national and international professional sports leagues, players associations, and other sports and entertainment properties, as well as individual sports teams and hundreds of athletes. We strive to maximize the presence and reach for each of these partners across the globe.

Fanatics strongly supports House Bill 184, as it brings much-needed clarity, transparency, and fairness to the Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) landscape for Ohio's student-athletes. We believe this legislation is a crucial step forward in protecting athletes' rights and ensuring they can engage in NIL activities without being subject to exploitation or ambiguity. However, we believe there are some additional guardrails that should be added to House Bill 184 to strengthen protections for student-athletes and ensure clarity and fairness in NIL agreements. We urge the Committee to amend as follows:



1. Ohio Choice of Law and Venue

The bill currently does not prevent NIL contracts from selecting out-of-state law or venue, which undermines the intent of Ohio's protections.

Proposed Change: All NIL-related contracts entered into by student-athletes enrolled at Ohio institutions should mandate Ohio law as the governing law and Ohio courts as the exclusive venue.

Without this provision, bad actors can circumvent Ohio's safeguards by simply inserting a clause pointing to another state's laws, leaving Ohio athletes unprotected despite legislative intent.

2. Expansion to Cover Personal Services Contracts

The bill appears to narrowly focus on name, image, and likeness licenses, excluding other key agreements like personal services.

Proposed Change: The bill should explicitly include personal services agreements, such as those involving appearances, content creation, or promotional work.

Many NIL agreements are hybrid contracts—splitting NIL licensing and personal services. Covering only NIL rights leads to fragmented enforcement and loopholes where exploitative service terms persist even after eligibility ends.

3. Portability and Applicability Across Transfers

It is unclear whether the bill's protections apply when a student transfers into or out of Ohio.

Proposed Change: Clarify that the law applies to any NIL contract entered into by a student-athlete while enrolled at an Ohio institution, regardless of whether they later transfer out—or if a student transfers in, the rules apply to all NIL contracts entered into while in Ohio.

Student-athletes are increasingly mobile, and consistency in protection must follow the athlete, not just the institution.

Fanatics thanks the bill sponsors, Representatives Brian Stewart and Ty Mathews, for advancing this important legislation to protect Ohio's student-athletes. Fanatics is proud to support this effort and urges the Committee to strengthen the bill to close loopholes that currently exist in the legislation. A revised House Bill 184 will ensure clarity and fairness in NIL agreements and will make Ohio a leader in protecting student-athletes in the ever-changing landscape of intercollegiate athletics.

Thank you for your time and consideration.