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SB-661 Student Athlete Bill of Rights. (2023-2024)

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Senate Bill No. 661

CHAPTER 625

An act to amend Section 67452 of the Education Code, relating to collegiate athletics.

[Approved by Governor October 08, 2023. Filed with Secretary of State October 08, 2023.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 661, Bradford. Student Athlete Bill of Rights.

Existing law establishes a system of postsecondary education in this state, including the University of California, the California State University, private postsecondary educational institutions, and independent institutions of higher education, as 4 segments of that system. Existing law, known as the Student Athlete Bill of Rights, provides for certain benefits for student athletes, including the protection of athletic scholarships, and exempts an institution that maintains an intercollegiate athletic program and receives, as an average, less than \$10,000,000 in annual income derived from media rights for intercollegiate athletics from being subject to these requirements. Existing law requires an institution that is required to grant these benefits to student athletes to rely exclusively on revenue derived from media rights for intercollegiate athletics to defray any costs accrued from granting these benefits to student athletes.

This bill would also grant these benefits to student athletes who attend institutions that receive, as an average, less than \$10,000,000 in annual income derived from media rights for intercollegiate athletics and participate in intercollegiate athletic programs whose teams do not compete in Division III of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. The bill would remove the requirement on institutions to rely exclusively on revenue derived from media rights for intercollegiate athletics to defray any costs accrued from affording these benefits to student athletes.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 67452 of the Education Code is amended to read:

67452. (a) Commencing with the 2013–14 academic year, an athletic program shall comply with all of the following:

(1) (A) If an athletic program does not renew an athletic scholarship of a student athlete who suffers an incapacitating injury or illness resulting from the student athlete's participation in the athletic program, and the institution of higher education's medical staff determines that the student is medically ineligible to participate in intercollegiate athletics, the institution of higher education shall provide an equivalent scholarship that, combined with the total duration of any previous athletic scholarship or scholarships received by the student athlete, will be provided for a total of up to five academic years or until the student athlete completes their undergraduate degree, whichever period is shorter. Additional years may be provided at the discretion of the institution of higher education, and additional years may be required pursuant to state law.

(B) If a student athlete takes a temporary leave of absence from an institution of higher education, the duration of that leave of absence shall not count against the five-year limit on eligibility for an equivalent scholarship imposed by subparagraph (A).

(C) An athletic program shall provide an equivalent scholarship to a student athlete who was on an athletic scholarship and is in good standing, but has exhausted their athletic eligibility, for up to one year or until the student athlete completes their primary undergraduate degree, whichever is shorter, except that an athletic program with a graduation success rate that is above 60 percent, disaggregated by team, shall not be subject to the requirements of this subparagraph. Additional years may be provided at the discretion of the institution of higher education, and additional years may be required pursuant to state law.

(D) A student athlete whose athletic scholarship is not renewed for cause by an athletic program shall receive no benefits under this part, but may appeal this decision within the institution of higher education attended by the student or within the athletic conference or association of which that institution of higher education is a member, as appropriate.

(2) Each athletic program shall conduct a financial and life skills workshop for all of its first-year and third-year student athletes at the beginning of the academic year. This workshop shall include, but not be limited to, information concerning financial aid, debt management, and a recommended budget for full-scholarship and partial-scholarship student athletes living on or off campus during the academic year and the summer term based on the current academic year's cost of attendance. The workshop shall also include information on time management skills necessary for success as a student athlete, and academic resources available on campus.

(3) An institution of higher education shall grant a student athlete the same rights as other students with regard to any and all matters related to possible adverse or disciplinary actions, including, but not necessarily limited to, actions involving athletically related financial aid.

(4) An athletic program shall respond within seven business days with an answer to a student athlete's written request to transfer to another institution of higher education.

(b) This section shall not apply to an athletic program whose teams compete in Division III of the National Collegiate Athletic Association.