

# California becomes first state to allow college athletes to be compensated

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Student athletes at public and private colleges and universities in California will be allowed to market and profit from their name, image and likeness beginning in 2023 after Gov. Gavin Newsom on Monday signed the country's first pay-to-play law that is expected to have enormous implications on college sports and higher education writ large.

Newsom's decision is just the latest mark on the timeline of a contentious debate that's pulled into its orbit student athletes and professional athletes, state legislators and members of Congress, presidents of colleges and universities and a Democratic presidential candidate, celebrities, higher education policy experts and lawyers. And in signing the bill, he deals the biggest blow yet to the National Collegiate Athletic Association's control over a billion-dollar system of amateur athletics, which has been chipped away in federal court but is now likely permanently fractured as the push to pay college athletes in California is already prompting other states to consider such legislation.

"Colleges and universities reap billions from these student athletes' sacrifices and success but block them from earning a single dollar," Newsom said Friday in a recorded message released on Monday morning, which shows him signing the bill alongside Los Angeles Lakers basketball player LeBron James and former college athletes. "That's a bankrupt model – one that puts institutions ahead of the students they are supposed to serve."

The law, which will go into effect in three years to allow institutions of higher education and the NCAA to address a number of legal and logistical questions, will allow student athletes to accept endorsements, be paid for things like their autograph and to hire agents, all of which are not allowed under the current NCAA bylaws.

The NCAA has been aggressive in its opposition to the legislation, lobbying Newsom to veto the measure in the days before he signed it into law, calling it "unconstitutional" and warning that it would upend the balance of college sports. NCAA President Mark Emmert threatened to bar California's college teams from participating in national championships under the assumption that the best athletes in the country would flock to the Golden State.

In the wake of the governor blessing the bill, which passed the state's Assembly 72-0 and the Senate 39-0, Emmert reaffirmed those warnings.

"The NCAA agrees changes are needed to continue to support student-athletes, but improvement needs to happen on a national level through the NCAA's rules-making process," the NCAA said in a statement. "Unfortunately, this new law already is creating confusion for current and future student-athletes, coaches, administrators and campuses, and not just in California."

"As more states consider their own specific legislation related to this topic, it is clear that a patchwork of different laws from different states will make unattainable the goal of providing a fair and level playing field for 1,100 campuses and nearly half a million student-athletes nationwide," it said.

**Full article is available [here](#).**

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