

California universities reject proposed 'Student Athlete Bill of Rights'

By Hannah Madans, Sacramento Bee

Four California universities with big-time sports programs are fighting a legislative effort that could radically change the way schools recruit, educate and retain student athletes.

The schools are opposing the "Student Athlete Bill of Rights," they say, because it would be too expensive, put their programs at a competitive disadvantage and may go against NCAA rules.

Senate Bill 1525, by Sen. Alex Padilla, D-Los Angeles, would require schools earning more than \$10 million a year in media revenue from athletic programs to continue an athlete's scholarship if he or she is no longer able to participate in athletics, and would allow athletes to switch schools without restriction. The bill also would force schools to provide student athletes with life skills and financial workshops and pay health care premiums for low-income individuals.

"It's evident to me we're losing focus on the mission of the university itself," Padilla said. Student athletes, he added, "should be competing second to getting an education."

His measure would affect USC, UCLA, UC Berkeley and Stanford University. Other schools would be affected if their media revenue reaches the \$10 million threshold.

The bill's centerpiece provision would require schools to provide scholarships to athletes who become injured or whose scholarships aren't renewed for nondisciplinary reasons. The impact would be tempered at some schools, however, because

this provision would not apply to athletes on teams with a graduation rate greater than 60 percent. At Stanford, for instance, all athletic teams have a graduation rate over 90 percent, said Patrick Dunkley, Stanford's deputy director of athletics.

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