

HEARING BEFORE THE UNITED STATES SENATE  
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

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Written Testimony of Trinity Thomas  
Former student-athlete at the University of Florida

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak here today. I have spent the last five years competing on the University of Florida's gymnastics team. Over the course of my time at UF, I've completed my bachelor's degree in Applied Physiology and Kinesiology and my master's degree in Health Education and Behavior.

I've had the privilege of competing before and after name, image, and likeness (NIL) opportunities became available for student athletes. The experiences that I've had along the way have helped develop me into the young woman that I am today. I am currently serving as student-assistant coach for the gymnastics team at the University of Florida while pursuing a second master's degree in entrepreneurship and training for a chance to compete at the US Olympic trials in 2024.

As a student-athlete at the University of Florida, I have had the opportunity to receive an education from a top 5 university while also competing against some of the best gymnasts in the Nation. Competing against the best athletes on the biggest stages has provided me with more opportunities than I ever imagined possible when I started gymnastics as a little girl in Pennsylvania. One of the biggest opportunities collegiate gymnastics has given me is the ability to benefit from the changes in NIL policies that have recently come to college athletics.

While student-athletes weren't yet able to benefit from NIL when I first arrived at the University of Florida, I was immediately intrigued once the rules were changed. Admittedly, it took many of my fellow athletes and me time to learn how to navigate the waters of NIL, and everybody is still learning as we go, given it is new and uncharted territory. It's been interesting to navigate but I was able to interview and sign with agencies, partner with various companies, learn to become an entrepreneur, focus on building my brand, and work on so many cool personal projects that mean a lot to me.

The first year that student-athletes had the ability to take advantage of NIL, I was able to get iPads for my younger siblings as Christmas gifts, Kids gymnastics camps had the ability to promote the fact that I would be coming to work with them, I worked with companies to support women's sports, and more.

Unfortunately, one of the parts of NIL that makes it difficult for student-athletes is the varying laws and regulations that are in place from state to state. There currently is no single standard that applies to all student-athletes in all sports, which oftentimes leaves us confused. In some cases, the different laws also place certain student-athletes at a disadvantage depending on where they go to school.

Recently, I was invited to attend SEC Day on the Hill in Washington, D.C. to speak with representatives from Congress. Most of my discussions centered around the issue of NIL and allowed me to share some of my experiences as a student-athlete, including how NIL policies have impacted me personally – both the positives and the areas where there could still be improvements.

While the discussions were positive, it seems clear that the best path forward for everyone would be if we had a federal NIL policy that applied to all athletes from every sport, at every school, and at every level.

This will create equal opportunity for all student-athletes to benefit from NIL and will create a uniform standard to ensure we're all playing by the same rules and eliminate confusion and unfair advantages.

A federal law will also have the benefit of ensuring the future of sports like gymnastics are protected. The SEC is one of the nation's hotbeds for showcasing and developing Olympic talent, and it would be a huge loss that would be felt well beyond just college athletics if these sports were put at risk due to any future legislation that might come from one state or another.

Protecting the future of my sport, and the dozens of other sports that help develop future Olympians should be a top priority. Not only do women's and Olympic sports at the college level help young women like me receive a college education, but they also help athletes benefit from the very same NIL opportunities I have experienced during my time as a student-athlete at Florida.

While college sports took a step forward with NIL during my time as a student-athlete, more can still be done to better the lives of all student-athletes. I am hopeful we will soon have a national standard and the future of college athletics will be improved for the next generation of great student-athletes.

Thank you for taking the time to focus on a topic that is important to me and hundreds of thousands of student-athletes all over the nation.