College sports could soon answer to Washington

By ANTHONY ANGELILLO
Copy Editor

Since the NCAA dropped its restrictions on college athletes earning money from their name, image and likeness (NIL) in July 2021, the last five years have been reshaped in terms of who can transfer, who gets paid and how long athletes can play.

On Sept. 28, the U.S. Senate voted 77-22 to pass the Protect College Sports Act, a bill written by Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas and Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash.

College athletes would gain a nationwide right to earn NIL money, replacing a collection of state laws. Schools can already pay athletes directly, up to $21.58 million between players this year under the House v. NCAA settlement.

Under the bill, schools could spend another $22.5 million to keep their own athletes, plus another $5 million more tied to paying for athletes in women's and other nonrevenue sports. That brings the total close to $50 million a year.

Schools cannot cut or reduce a scholarship because of an injury, illness or poor play. Scholarships would remain open for 10 years after eligibility ends, allowing athletes to finish their degrees.

Division I schools would also cover out-of-pocket medical costs for sports injuries while athletes compete and for five years after. Agents would have to register, and their fees would be capped at 5%.

Athletes are limited to one transfer without losing eligibility, with exceptions like a coach leaving or a sport being cut. A second transfer would mean sitting out a year.

Eligibility would be capped at five years, and former pros would face new restrictions.

"Pros are trying to play ball against college kids," Cruz said during his remarks on the Senate floor.

Schools, conferences and the NCAA would receive a limited antitrust shield to enforce rules on pay, eligibility and transfers. The same kinds of rules athletes have beaten in court.

Athletic departments would also answer to Washington, and large and midsize programs would have to keep as many scholarships and roster spots in nonrevenue sports as they had in 2024-25.

Football coaches who leave midseason cannot work for another major program until the season ends.

Each power conference would be capped at 20 schools, and a school switching from one to another would have to spend three years as an independent first.

Schools could pool their media rights the way pro leagues do, and football and basketball games would need at least one free local broadcast option in each home market.

That makes watching your favorite teams that much harder, from college to the pros.

The NFL, NBA, MLB and NHL all support the bill, with MLB saying the eligibility rules would help every level of baseball.

However, unions for pro players are split in their support. The players' associations for the NFL and NBA praised the parts of the bill, but the NFL union also joined nine other pro unions in an AFL-CIO statement saying the bill undercuts collective bargaining for college athletes.

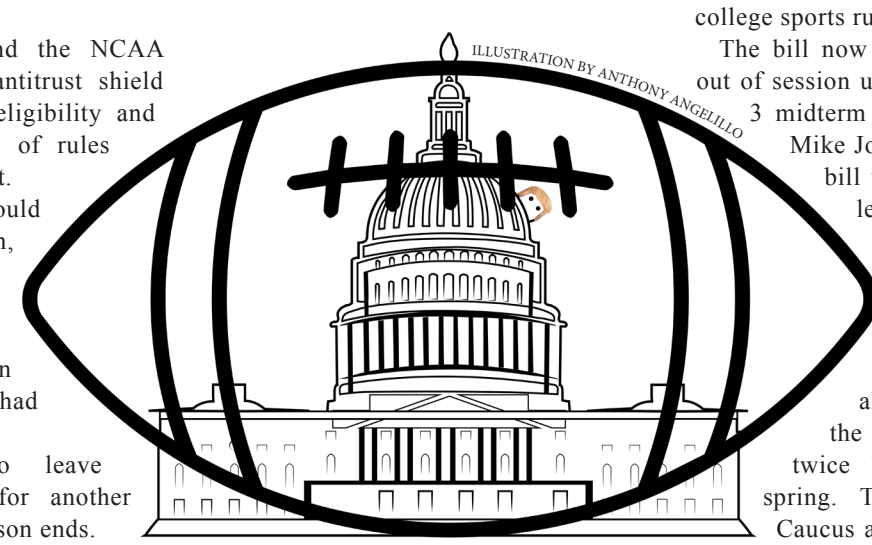
ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY ANGELILLO

Cantwell argued that the limits in the bill protect athletes who rarely make headlines. She included women's and Olympic sports, which pay the price because they are the easiest to cut.

"It's time to make sports about playing sports again, and not about the money," Cantwell said on the Senate floor.

Critics say the bill hands power back to the NCAA without giving athletes a say. Former Arizona State swimmer Grant House, lead plaintiff in House v. NCAA, warned that players "will lose the ability to collectively bargain" over those rules.

Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., argued the bill caps player pay while leaving coaching salaries alone. Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., objected on different grounds, saying the founders never pictured Congress writing college sports rules.

The bill now heads to a House that is out of session until Nov. 9, after the Nov. 3 midterm elections. House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., has said the bill will come up before then, leaving a lame-duck session that runs through Dec. 17. Cruz still insists "the House can pass this in one day."

House Republicans already tied their own bill, the SCORE Act, which stalled twice last fall and again this spring. The Congressional Black Caucus already opposes the Senate bill. On Oct. 2, a group of 21 House members led by Rep. Neal Dumn, R-Fla., asked House leaders to drop or rewrite the conference cap. Any change would send the bill back to the Senate.

Most of the athletes this bill would cover are teenagers and young adults trying to get through a season. Their college careers can now be impacted by lawmakers who may not be in office when the new year starts.

So, a swimmer with the last name House helped tear down the old system. Now a different House decides what replaces it.

New Spider-Man show based on highly controversial 'Clone Saga'

By ALEX ZWEBACK
Contributing Writer

Amazon's streaming service, Prime Video, along with Sony Pictures Studios, is working to finalize plans for a new Spider-Man show, but it's not the Spider-Man you'd expect.

The story is called "The Clone Saga," and it revolves around the two clones of Peter Parker: Ben Reilly and Kaine Parker. The series is rumored to follow Reilly and Kaine as they struggle with their identities as clones. It would be a buddy-cop-style show, similar to the hit 2026 show "Lanterns." They discover that they are clones, which leads to the main plotline.

Producers Amy Pascal, Phil Lord, Christopher Miller and writer Kelvin Yu are expected to be executive producers on the show, as Yu is reported to be the head developer and writer of the show. If greenlit, it will be streaming on MGM+ before heading over to Prime Video.

In the sensational comic story by writers Terry Kavanagh, Joey Cavalieri, Todd Dezago, J.M. DeMatteis and Tom DeFalco, "The Clone Saga" follows Peter, Spider-Man and his two clones, Reilly and Kaine, as they attempt to figure out who the real Peter Parker is.

The story takes place directly after the events of "The Death of Gwen Stacy," Amazing Spider-Man no. 121-122 by writer Gerry Conway. After the death of his student, Gwen Stacy, Dr. Miles Warren becomes the villain called The Jackal and creates a clone of Stacy. In doing so, he discovers that Peter is Spider-Man; it just so happens that The Jackal blames Spider-Man for Stacy's death. He creates multiple clones of Peter in order to drag him into an identity crisis, which spectacularly succeeds. Subsequently, The Jackal creates an identity crisis for both of Peter's clones.

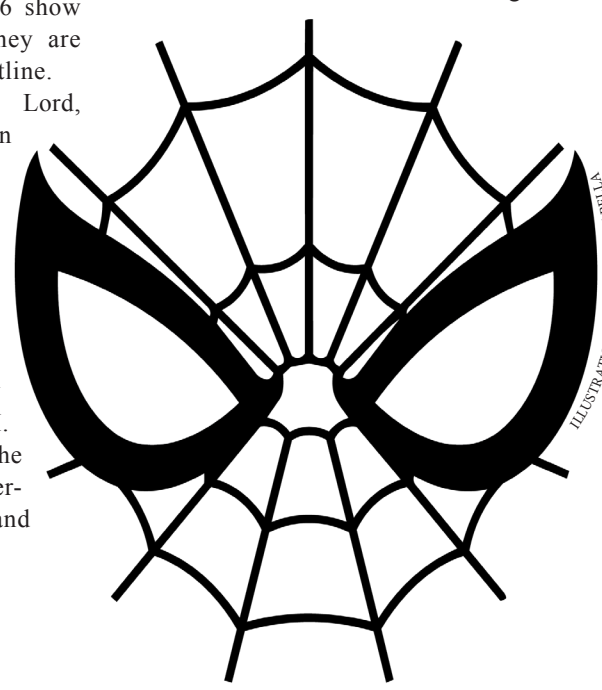
ILLUSTRATION BY LILIANA MIRABELLA

Various fans expect the project to not get its feet off the ground; the ones that do are worried about misinterpretation and mischaracterization. Concerns stem from Deadline reports that Reilly and Kaine's characters may be entirely changed. Additionally, a lot of fans have low expectations due to Sony's recent output of Spider-Man properties.

It's certain that every Clone Saga fan wants this project to be faithful, amazing and successful. The desire is strong for the damage done to Reilly and Kaine to be reversed. Fans urge the studio to stay away from recent comic storylines that have turned the characters into one-off stereotypes and plotlines that remove the traits that make the characters special and unique.

Still, sources share that fans should be prepared to brace themselves for "significant changes." Insiders have confidently stated that Reilly will wear his iconic Scarlet Spider suit consisting of a red bodysuit and a blue, sleeveless sweatshirt adorned with his very own spider logo. Reilly and Kaine will likely battle other, less prominent Spider-Man clones, including the villain Spider-Cide.

Other concerns include copyright claims regarding the names "Peter Parker" and "Spider-Man," which has been an ongoing issue, most recently seen in Sony's newest Spider-Man show, "Spider-Noir," starring actor Nicolas Cage. Parker's name infringed on Marvel's copyright, and the show ultimately used Reilly's name in place of Parker, while "Spider-Man" was replaced with "The Spider." "Spider-Noir" sparked outrage among fans after it was canceled after only one season. Fans find it hard to get excited for the new Clone Saga show if the likely possibility of cancellation is just around the corner.

Many sources report that, due to copyright issues, Peter and the rest of his family will not appear in the show at all or, at least, not by name. Some fans have gone as far as to say that if Peter, Aunt May and Ben Parker can't be mentioned, there's no point in making the show.

Fans are ultimately divided on the show. Many have decided that the cast and writers will make or break the show, as well as the reputation of the highly divisive Clone Saga and the already-sullied reputations of the clones of Peter.