



# Sen. Marsha Blackburn introduces HUSTLE Act to help student-athletes from sports page 1

athletics. “College athletes are now earning billions of dollars from their name, image, and likeness—and rightly so. We must empower these students to safeguard their financial future and protect themselves against rogue agents,” said Senator Blackburn. “The HUSTLE Act would allow college athletes to invest their earnings in a tax-advantaged account that grows over time, strengthen financial education, and create safeguards to prevent exploitation by dishonest agents.”

“This bill focuses in on the financial security and safety of college athletes who – finally – are earning compensation for their name, image, and likeness (NIL),” said Senator Cantwell. “Many of these athletes will be in a unique situation where they will earn NIL income during a relatively brief period of their careers. Our bill will set up a specific NIL Account where they can set aside some of that income and build long-term savings. The bill also will protect athletes and their NIL earnings against financial exploitation by unscrupulous agents. Since athletes have been able to earn NIL, some have been victimized by agents who have charged shockingly high commissions or have tried to take ownership of the athlete’s intellectual property rights. Our bill will rein in these abuses and require agents to register with a state.”

## THE HUSTLE ACT

The HUSTLE Act would:

- Allow student-athletes to contribute their NIL income up to the annual gift-tax exclusion amount to an NIL Investment Account, with the funds growing tax-free;
- Allow up to \$35,000 of unused NIL account funds to be rolled over into an IRA or other retirement vehicle once the athlete has been out of college sports for at least a year;
- Require trustees to provide financial education to ensure athletes understand and manage their NIL savings responsibly; and
- Direct the U.S. Department of the Treasury to issue regulations to prevent abuse, ensure proper reporting, track contribution limits, and define additional qualified expenses.
- The HUSTLE Act would also modernize the Sports Agent Responsibility and Trust Act by:
- Requiring athlete agents to register with a state before representing athletes in NIL endorsements;
- Capping agent fees at 5 percent and certifying their registration to the athletic association that governs the athlete’s sport;
- Further banning a range of deceptive practices, including misrepresenting NIL opportunities to influence enrollment or transfer decisions and signing athletes to contracts that extend beyond their eligibility; and
- Requiring athletic associations—such as the NCAA or other national governing bodies—to maintain a public, searchable online registry of all registered and certified athlete agents, dramatically increasing transparency for athletes and families.

## BACKGROUND

•Since the Supreme Court af-

firmed in 2021 that college athletes have a right to profit from their name, image, and likeness, college athletics has turned into a multibillion-dollar marketplace. NIL deals generated over \$1.2 billion in the 2023-2024 period, with projections to exceed \$2.5 billion by 2025-2026 if revenue sharing is fully implemented. •Athletes who just a few years ago were prohibited from accepting basic sponsorships are now signing deals with national brands, monetizing social media platforms, licensing personal trademarks, and participating in increasingly complex commercial partnerships. •While this new environment gives athletes unprecedented earning power, these athletes can often lack the financial tools, institutional support, or regulatory safeguards necessary to navigate such a complex market. •In a 2022 NCAA survey of over 9,800 athletes, 49% indicated a need for educational resources specifically on tax and financial literacy. In the same study, only 9% of student-athletes had ever met with a financial counselor. •This mismatch—significant income paired with limited guidance—shows that student-athletes must be further empowered to invest in their financial futures and protect their long-term financial well-being.

WHAT THEY ARE SAYING Senators Blackburn and Cantwell have worked with outside entities to solicit feedback for this bipartisan legislation to support college athletes:

“Senator Blackburn is an advocate for student-athletes and continues to pursue innovative solutions related to their name, image, and likeness. At UT, we have long prioritized providing student-athletes with opportunities to build strong financial literacy. Federal incentives that support saving and investing NIL assets will further empower them to secure a strong financial foundation and thrive long after their time on Rocky Top,” said *University of Tennessee, Knoxville*.

“The Southeastern Conference is grateful for the continued engagement of lawmakers in addressing the evolving needs of student-athletes. The HUSTLE Act represents a constructive approach by establishing tax-advantaged NIL investment accounts that encourage financial education, long-term savings, and responsible management of earnings. We appreciate Congress’s sustained bipartisan commitment to developing national, consistent standards that support student-athletes and enhance their opportunities in this rapidly changing environment,” said *SEC Commissioner Greg Sankey*.

“As result of sweeping changes to college sports, this year, student-athletes will receive approximately \$1 billion in direct financial benefits from their universities, as well scholarship guarantees and greater support for their mental health and well-being. The NCAA fully supports providing athletes with more resources to achieve long term financial success and cracking down on unscrupulous agents to protect student-athletes,” said *Tim Buckley, Senior Vice President of External Affairs at NCAA*.

# Profile: Head Coach Charles Huff from sports page 1



*“Coach Huff brings energy, discipline and a vision that aligns perfectly with who we are and where we want to go as a University,” Cato Johnson, Board of Trustees Chairman said. “He is a tremendous competitor who knows what it takes to win at the highest levels of college football. We look forward to supporting him as the next leader of Tiger Football.”*

ern Miss football, Huff guided the Golden Eagles to a complete revamp; after the team ranked near the bottom in nearly every statistical category in 2024, Huff’s team flipped the script and became one of the most dangerous teams to play in FBS. The team’s 21 interceptions ranked first in the country while the 26 total turnovers created put Southern Miss top four in all of Division I. Boasting a 1.00 turnover margin, the Golden Eagles held opponents to under 28 points per game, a more than 10-point difference from the year prior. “Coach Huff brings energy, discipline and a vision that aligns perfectly with who we are and where we want to go as a University,” Cato Johnson, Board of Trustees Chairman said. “He is a tremendous competitor who knows what it takes to win at the highest levels of college football. We look forward to supporting him as the next leader of Tiger Football.” Offensively, the Golden Eagles were slinging the ball around the field with a 65.3% completion percentage - up 88 spots in the rankings from the 2024 season - while having the number one passing offense in the Sun Belt with nearly 267 yards per game. Nine Golden Eagles earned All-Sun Belt Conference honors with J’Mond Tapp (defensive lineman), Chris Jones (linebacker) and Josh Moten (defensive back) all earning First Team nods. Tapp led the Southern Miss defensive line with 67 tackles (18 solo) with team bests of 11.5 tackles for loss and 7.5 sacks. His sack total ranked second in the Sun Belt and No. 28 nationally, while his tackles per game total ranked No.1 among defensive linemen in the league. The Sun Belt’s leading tackler, Jones ranked seventh nationally in total tackles, averaging 10.7 per contest (128 total). Jones was the first Golden Eagle to record 100-plus tackles in a season since D’Nerius Antoine in 2015 and produced the most since Gerald McRath registered 137 in 2008. Moten proved to be one of the most dangerous cornerbacks in the league, ranking fourth nationally with five interceptions while sitting in the top eight in the country in passes defenses. Huff made his way to Southern Miss after serving as head coach at Marshall University from 2021-24, posting a 32-20 record that culminated with a 31-3 victory over Louisiana in the 2024 Sun Belt Conference championship game. Huff holds the distinction of being the only Marshall coach in the FBS era to lead the Herd to a

coach Nick Saban’s staff for the 2019 and 2020 seasons. In his inaugural season in Tuscaloosa, Huff helped Najee Harris rush for a career-best 1,224 yards on 209 carries with 13 rushing touchdowns while catching 27 passes for 304 yards and seven more scores. In 2020, Harris was a consensus All-American who led the nation in total touchdowns (30), rushing touchdowns (26) and points (180). He also ranked third nationally in rushing yards (1,466) and holds the school record for total touchdowns (57), rushing touchdowns (46) and rushing yards (3,843). Huff arrived in Tuscaloosa after one season (2018) as the assistant head coach, run-game coordinator and running backs coach at Mississippi State. His one season in Starkville produced an effective rushing attack that averaged 223.6 yards per game to rank second in the SEC and 20th nationally. Huff spent four seasons (2014-17) as Penn State’s running backs coach and special teams coordinator. He recruited and developed one of the game’s most electrifying players in Barkley, who was drafted by the New York Giants as the No. 2 overall pick in the 2018 draft. Numerous records fell at the running back position and on special teams under Huff’s tutelage at Penn State. In 2017, Barkley was a consensus All-American, becoming the first Big Ten running back in history to win Offensive Player of the Year honors twice. A Walter Camp National Player of the Year finalist, Barkley ranked second nationally in all-purpose yards in 2017 (2,329). He broke four school career records, including rushing touchdowns

(43), total touchdowns (53), all-purpose yards (5,538) and consecutive games with a touchdown (15) in just three seasons. Huff spent the 2013 season at Western Michigan as the running backs coach and helped the unit nearly double its rushing yards from 2012. The Broncos ran for 1,394 yards in 2013 after running for just 735 yards the year before. During the 2012 season, Huff worked in the NFL as the assistant running backs coach for the Buffalo Bills. He helped guide C.J. Spiller to his first career 1,000-yard rushing campaign and a Pro Bowl invitation. In 2011, Huff was on James Franklin’s 2011 staff at Vanderbilt as the offensive quality control coach. Huff and Franklin also worked together at Maryland in 2009, when Huff was the assistant offensive line coach. Huff also mentored NFL first-round pick Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie as the tight ends and special teams coach at Tennessee State from 2007-08. Huff graduated in 2005 from Hampton University where he served as a team captain, starting 12 games at center as a senior in 2005. He also played guard, fullback and tight end in his career. “My family and I are so fired up about this opportunity,” Huff said. “The city of Memphis, the leadership at the University and the level of consistency the football program has had over the recent years is incredible. I would like to thank University President Dr. Bill Hardgrave, Athletics Director Dr. Ed Scott, and their entire team who have instilled their faith in me to lead this outstanding program. To the city of Memphis and Tiger Nation, it’s time to STAND UP! To the players and administration, it’s go time!” A native of Denton, Maryland, Huff and his wife, Jessica, have three boys: B.J., Beau and Blaze. Season ticket deposits for the 2026 season - Visit [www.gotigersgo.com](http://www.gotigersgo.com) to learn more. Please note that the prices shown do not include taxes and fees. Additional information about season ticket renewals will be announced at a later date.

For complete information on Memphis Tigers Football, visit [www.GoTigersGo.com](http://www.GoTigersGo.com) and follow the team’s social media channels on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

# #12 Ja Morant to treat 250 fans with tickets to Grizzlies game on 12/12 against Utah

– Grizzlies to Offer \$12 Tickets Online and at FedExForum Box Office –

MEMPHIS, Tenn. December 9, 2025 – Memphis Grizzlies guard #12 Ja Morant is treating 250 fans with a pair of tickets to the game on Friday, 12/12, at 7 p.m. CT against the Utah Jazz. Tickets will be given away Wednesday, Dec. 10, at 2 p.m. inside the Grand Lobby of FedExForum on a first-come, first-serve basis (limit of two tickets per adult). For fans who miss out, the Grizzlies will be offering tickets as low as \$12 for Memphis’ game on Friday, 12/12, online at [grizzlies.com/twelve](http://grizzlies.com/twelve) or at the FedExForum Box Office. Fans at the event can also take advantage of 12% off all regularly priced

items at the Grizzlies Den and cannot be combined with other discounted items. Join Grizz and the Claw Crew inside the Grand Lobby of FedExForum at 2 p.m. for photo ops and other surprises. Fans who want to support the Memphis Grizzlies and purchase 2025-26 season tickets, single

game tickets or partial plans can do so now by going online to [grizzlies.com/tickets](http://grizzlies.com/tickets). For single game tickets and more information on the Grizzlies, visit [grizzlies.com](http://grizzlies.com), ‘like’ Memphis Grizzlies on Facebook or follow @memgrizz on Twitter/X and Instagram.



Watch for The Mid-South Tribune’s 31st Annual Black History Month “250” celebrating America’s Culture of ***Freedom!***

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