

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

January 28, 2013

Dr. Mark Emmert  
President  
National Collegiate Athletic Association  
P.O. Box 6222  
Indianapolis, IN 46206

Dear Dr. Emmert:

We are writing to ask you to restore the athletic scholarships taken away as part of the NCAA's sanctioning of The Pennsylvania State University. The past, current, and potential future student-athletes at Penn State had nothing to do with the unspeakable crimes committed by Jerry Sandusky and should not have to suffer as a result of his actions. Further, the scholarship reduction not only impacts Penn State, but effectively denies individuals access to higher education nationwide.

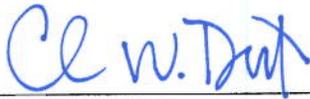
By allowing the reduction of scholarships to remain in place, the NCAA only harms innocent student-athletes who had nothing to do with the terrible crimes perpetrated by Jerry Sandusky. As you are well aware, these crimes took place prior to the enrollment of any students negatively impacted by the scholarship reductions. This restriction bars upwards of 40 talented student-athletes the opportunity to receive a college degree and runs contrary to important goals of the NCAA, which is emphasizing the education of and providing access to higher education for student-athletes.

At the time the NCAA implemented the sanctions against Penn State you stated, "our goal is not to be just punitive but to make sure the university establishes an athletic culture and daily mindset in which football will never again be placed ahead of educating, nurturing and protecting young people." As the trend in graduation rates reveals, Penn State, and particularly the football program, considers the education of its players its highest priority. The most recent available data shows that Penn State football players had an overall graduation rate of 91%, which was seventh among all FBS schools and second in the Big Ten. Further, Penn State football players graduated at a rate higher than the school's general, non-athlete population, which had a graduation rate of 85%. Finally, African American football players graduated at a rate of 94%, which is 32% higher than the national average. Based on these statistics, Penn State clearly places the education of its student-athletes ahead of football. Thus, arbitrarily eliminating 40 scholarships to Penn State is undeniably and inexcusably punitive to young people who had absolutely nothing to do with Jerry Sandusky's mortal crimes.

As a former PHEAA board member and current member of the House Appropriations Committee, and a member of the House Committee on Education & the Workforce, we have continually worked towards ensuring access to higher education for those who cannot afford it. These efforts have included support for increased Pell Grant funding and increased Career and Technical Education. We are dismayed by the NCAA's denial of access to higher education to innocent student-athletes, which completely runs afoul of your organization's supposed emphasis on providing access to higher education for student-athletes. If you refuse to restore the denied scholarships, we ask that you deduct from the sanctions a dollar amount equal to the cost of the 40 scholarships so that Penn State can continue to provide access to its elite academic programs.

Hurting innocent student-athletes by denying them access to higher education will do nothing to account for Jerry Sandusky's crimes. Therefore, we urge you to consider this request of modifying the scholarship portion of the consent decree. Reinstating these scholarships fulfills the NCAA's stated commitment to academics and to promoting the success of student-athletes in the classroom.

Sincerely,



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CHARLES W. DENT  
Member of Congress



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GLENN 'GT' THOMPSON  
Member of Congress