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The NCAA has been opposed to paying college athletes for years; however, recently the NCAA's Board of Governors voted unanimously to allow collegiate athletes to benefit from the use of their name, image and likeness. The Board of Governors may have felt some pressure from the state of California, whose governor, Gavin Newsom, passed the Fair Pay to Play Act about a month before the NCAA decided to take action. If the NCAA had not taken action, colleges in California would have had an unfair advantage in recruiting, which is why the NCAA was going to ban them from competing in NCAA events if they did not pass the law.

In an interview with the New York Times, Newsom said, "Every single student in the university can market their name, image and likeness; they can go and get a YouTube channel and they can monetize that. The only group that can't are athletes." NCAA President Mark Emmert stated that the California law, along with others like it and pressure from well-known athletes such as

LeBron, pushed the NCAA to make a change.

The NCAA said, "NCAA members continually strive to improve the student-athlete experience, including paying thorough attention to the changing environment of the student body and within higher education. After improving academic support, providing cost of attendance, guaranteeing scholarships and strengthening health and safety, among many changes, the NCAA membership determined that exploring this issue was an important step to support student-athletes within the context of higher education. NCAA leadership also determined that the membership must come together to respond to federal and state legislative proposals that would be harmful to a national, uniform college athletics model."

The NCAA says that they are working on a timeline and that the next step in that timeline was to talk about athletes benefiting. If the NCAA is really about the players, then why would they not talk about it sooner?

The NCAA also opposes the new California Fair Pay to Play Act because they believe, "It is critical that college sports are regulated at

a national level. This ensures the uniformity of rules and a level playing field for student athletes. The California law and other proposed measures ultimately would lead to pay for play and turn college athletes into employees. This directly contradicts the mission of college sports within higher education — that student athletes are students first and choose to play a sport they love against other students while earning a degree."

Student athletes are always going to be encouraged to be students first, no matter what school they go to or what state it's in. The NCAA should have the final say in everything related to collegiate sports, but if they are so far behind the times, then it makes sense for states to take matters into their own hands like Governor Newsom did in California.

Much will change over the next few years as this law starts to take effect. The California law does not come into effect until 2023 and the NCAA law will take effect shortly after.

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