

Alabama lawmaker believes high school athletes should be able to sign NIL deals

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Ryan Hall

MONTGOMERY, Ala. ([WIAT](#)) — If your child plays a high school sport, they could soon be signing a name, image, and likeness deal.

A bill came up in a House committee Tuesday that would allow Alabama's student athletes to sign NIL contracts. Some students put hours into training for the big game and Rep. Jeremy Gray (D-Opelika) wants them to get paid for it. He said NIL deals will make the difference for some students.

"[It] protects life changing experiences for high school athletics, but at the same time, defends our young athletes' rights to work, and earn wages in a legitimate, bonafide manner," said Gray.

The bill prohibits players from wearing school logos in conjunction with a brand deal. Athletes would have to notify their school no less than seven days from signing a contract. Gray said students have moved to surrounding states in order to make NIL money.

"They already get recruited," he said. "I'm more of a person that believes in getting my money on top of the table, rather than under the

table."

But, Heath Harmon with the Alabama High School Athletic Association said it could have consequences.

"If NIL is eventually adopted by our membership, we must ensure we avoid mistakes that are being made at the collegiate level and other areas where it's being implemented," said Harmon. "I think it's safe to say no one is satisfied with the current state of collegiate athletics."

Rep. Andy Whitt (R-Harvest) said those mistakes have drastically changed college sports.

"It's ruined college football as I know it, athletics as I know it," he said. "There's no loyal teams anymore. There's no loyalty to a program."

Gray disagrees. He said he wants to help his fellow athletes.

"For me, someone who played college football, three sport athlete, was recruited by everyone- Alabama, Auburn, Clemson, you name it. I just think it's my duty to actually push this generation forward, and to understand the value of kids being able to earn money, and have rights to."

The bill did not receive a vote Tuesday. With four days left in the legislative session, lawmakers would have to move fast to get it through both chambers.