

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine signs NIL Executive Order



Ohio State governor Mike DeWine – flanked by Lt. Governor Jon Husted, state Sen. Niraj Antani (R-Miamisburg), former Ohio State quarterback Cardale Jones, Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith and Ohio State president Kristina Johnson – officially signed an executive order allowing for student-athletes in the state of Ohio to profit from their name, image and likeness rights on Monday afternoon at the Statehouse.

“Thirty-eight days ago, Gene (Smith) and I made a promise that we would have name, image and likeness here in Ohio before July 1,” Sen. Niraj Antani (R-Miamisburg) said. “Today, that promise is being delivered, thanks to the governor and lieutenant governor.”

The signing ended a whirlwind month (and some change) around the issue in Ohio, as the state rushed to keep pace with its counterparts in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, New Mexico, or Texas in passing NIL legislation by July 1. Antani originally introduced the bill in late May alongside Smith at Ohio State’s Covelli Center, citing the need to keep in line with the states at the front of the issue, both for the sake of Ohio athletes and for recruiting. However, DeWine confirmed that his executive order would affect July 1, keeping Ohio – and by extension Ohio State – on a level playing ground with those states.

“We want the best talent to know that they can succeed and prosper in Ohio and that we are committed to those athletes,” Husted said. “Across the country, it is emerging that there’s a lot of bipartisan support for this kind of action, and as amateur sports, particularly NCAA sports, are changing. We in Ohio are going to change right along with it to make sure our universities and athletes can succeed.”

“We all know what this is about,” Chancellor Randy Gardner said. “This is about Ohio’s ability to continue to compete, and whether it’s on the football field or the basketball court, or a college classroom or a science lab, Ohio competes.”

This comes after Antani’s bill nearly lost its widespread bipartisan support on June 25, as it traveled through the Ohio House of Representatives and gained an unrelated amendment that would ban transgender girls from girls in high school sports. The executive order issued today does not feature that amendment, which DeWine disapproved of on Friday.

"This issue is best addressed outside of government, through individual sports leagues and athletic associations, including the Ohio High School Athletic Association, who can tailor policies to meet the needs of their member athletes and member institutions," DeWine said in a June 25 statement.

The NCAA has yet to release any guidance regarding what NIL rights are and aren't permissible, meaning that the state laws will go into effect without pushback from the organization.

"Today, I will sign this executive order to give the athletes these rights, and these opportunities, and also to maintain Ohio's competitive advantage in college sports," DeWine said at the signing.

Antani said that he will continue to pursue a legislative option, but that for now, this is a suitable solution.