

Michigan Passes Student-Athlete Union Ban

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Michigan is poised to officially ban student-athletes at public colleges and universities from forming or joining a labor union. Gov. Rick Snyder is expected to sign the recently passed bill into law by the end of the year.

The bill is the state's response to the unionization efforts at Northwestern University, a private university, early this year. It would amend the Public Employment Relations Act (PERA) to specifically exclude "a student participating in intercollegiate athletics on behalf of a public university in this state" from the definition of a "public employee."

The prohibition would only apply to athletes at Michigan's public colleges and universities, as private colleges and universities like Northwestern are under the jurisdiction of federal labor laws, not state law. The well-publicized Northwestern football players case, which will affect private colleges and universities in Michigan and throughout the United States, will be decided by the National Labor Relations Board sometime in the future.

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