

1 **SENATE FLOOR VERSION**

2 April 16, 2025

3 **AS AMENDED**

4 ENGROSSED HOUSE
5 BILL NO. 1017

6 By: Moore, Boles, and Deck of
7 the House

8 and

9 Rader and Pederson of the
10 Senate

11 **[college sports - legislative intent - Commission -
12 study - report - consultants - Revolving Fund -
13 expenditures - funding sources - codification -
14 emergency]**

15 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

16 SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
17 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 9101 of Title 70, unless there
18 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

19 This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Oklahoma
20 College Athletic Conference Act".

21 SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
22 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 9102 of Title 70, unless there
23 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

24 The purpose of this legislation is to establish a new
intercollegiate athletic conference, with name to be determined, to
promote and regulate college athletics among member institutions

1 within the state. This conference will provide enhanced athletic
2 competition, foster community and state pride, support student-
3 athlete experience by giving more time in classroom and creating
4 higher graduation rates, reduction of university athletic budgets
5 due to less travel, provide better in-state rivalries to enhance
6 student and spectator experience, allow better in-state recruiting
7 thus keeping Oklahoma students in Oklahoma, and ensure compliance
8 with both state and federal regulations governing college athletics.

9 SECTION 3. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
10 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 9103 of Title 70, unless there
11 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

12 As used in the Oklahoma College Athletic Conference Act:

13 1. "Commission" means the body established under this act to
14 explore the creation of a new NCAA Division II athletic conference
15 in this state;

16 2. "NCAA" means the National Collegiate Athletic Association;

17 3. "NCAA Division II" means the governing body for
18 intercollegiate athletics for NCAA-member institutions that compete
19 at the Division II level, which balances athletics, academics, and
20 extracurricular activities;

21 4. "Member Institutions" means accredited colleges and
22 universities that would be potential members of the new NCAA
23 Division II conference;

24

1 5. "Student-Athletes" means individuals enrolled in member
2 institutions who participate in NCAA Division II athletics; and

3 6. "The Conference" means a collective body of NCAA Division II
4 institutions that would form an organized athletic conference under
5 the NCAA's rules and regulations.

6 SECTION 4. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
7 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 9104 of Title 70, unless there
8 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

9 A. There is hereby created an Oklahoma NCAA Division II
10 Athletic Conference Exploration Commission. The Commission shall be
11 responsible for exploring and making recommendations regarding the
12 creation of a new NCAA Division II athletic conference consisting of
13 Oklahoma NCAA Division II schools and others to be determined and
14 named at a later date.

15 B. The Commission shall initially be composed of ten (10)
16 members as follows:

- 17 1. The president of Northeastern State University;
- 18 2. The president of Southwestern Oklahoma State University;
- 19 3. The president of Northwestern Oklahoma State University;
- 20 4. The president of Southeastern Oklahoma State University;
- 21 5. The president of East Central University;
- 22 6. The president of Cameron University;
- 23 7. The president of Rogers State University;
- 24 8. The president of Oklahoma Christian University;

1 9. The president of Southern Nazarene University; and

2 10. The president of Oklahoma Baptist University.

3 C. Membership of the Commission may be expanded to include
4 other institutional presidents by a majority vote of the initial
5 membership of the Commission if deemed appropriate.

6 D. The members shall elect a Chairperson of the Commission from
7 among its members, who will lead the Commission's activities.

8 SECTION 5. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
9 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 9105 of Title 70, unless there
10 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

11 A. The Commission shall conduct a thorough analysis of the
12 feasibility of establishing a new NCAA Division II athletic
13 conference in Oklahoma considering the following factors:

14 1. Potential member institutions, including public and private
15 colleges and universities both inside and outside the State of
16 Oklahoma who voluntarily seek to join the conference;

17 2. The academic and athletic capabilities of potential member
18 institutions to support NCAA Division II athletics;

19 3. Geographic and logistical considerations for scheduling and
20 travel;

21 4. Financial impact and sustainability for potential member
22 institutions;

23 5. The effects on student-athletes, including opportunities for
24 academic and athletic growth, recruitment, and competition; and

1 6. Potential community, regional, and economic benefits,
2 including sponsorships, fan engagement, and media exposure; and

3 7. Alignment with NCAA Division II regulations, policies, and
4 goals.

5 B. The Commission shall consult with a range of stakeholders
6 including, but not limited to:

7 1. NCAA Division II representatives and governing bodies;

8 2. Athletic directors, coaches, and administrators from current
9 NCAA Division II institutions in the region;

10 3. Student-athletes and athletic support staff;

11 4. Local government officials and business leaders;

12 5. Academic and athletic organizations that focus on the
13 interests of Division II athletics;

14 C. 1. The Commission shall prepare and submit a detailed
15 feasibility report to the Oklahoma House of Representatives and the
16 Oklahoma State Senate within twelve (12) months of its first
17 meeting.

18 2. The report shall include:

19 a. a summary of findings from the study and
20 consultations,

21 b. a comprehensive analysis of the benefits, costs, and
22 risks associated with establishing a new NCAA Division
23 II athletic conference,
24

- c. a list of potential member institutions, including any recommendations for institutions that should be invited to join,
- d. a proposed timeline and framework for transitioning into a new athletic conference, including governance structures, policies, and membership guidelines, and
- e. an assessment of funding and financial models to support the new conference, including membership fees, sponsorship, and broadcasting rights.

SECTION 6. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 9106 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. The Commission is authorized to hire independent consultants, conduct studies, and enter into contracts with experts in areas such as NCAA regulations, athletic conference operations, and financial modeling to assist in the creation of its final report.

B. The Commission may engage with the NCAA to ensure that any proposed conference structure aligns with NCAA Division II standards and policies.

SECTION 7. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 9107 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

1 Upon completion of the study, the Commission shall submit a
2 final report to the Oklahoma House of Representatives and the
3 Oklahoma State Senate with its findings, recommendations, and
4 proposed action steps for the creation of a new NCAA Division II
5 athletic conference. The Legislature shall review the Commission's
6 final report and recommendations and, if deemed appropriate,
7 introduce legislation to facilitate the establishment of the new
8 NCAA Division II conference.

9 SECTION 8. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
10 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 9108 of Title 70, unless there
11 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

12 1. There is hereby created in the State Treasury a revolving
13 fund for the Oklahoma NCAA Division II Athletic Conference
14 Exploration Commission to be designated the "Oklahoma NCAA Division
15 II Athletic Conference Exploration Commission Revolving Fund". The
16 fund shall be a continuing fund, not subject to fiscal year
17 limitations, and shall consist of all monies received by the
18 Oklahoma NCAA Division II Athletic Conference Exploration Commission
19 from appropriations, gifts, grants, donations, and bequests. All
20 monies accruing to the credit of the fund are hereby appropriated
21 and may be budgeted and expended by the Oklahoma NCAA Division II
22 Athletic Conference Exploration Commission for the purpose of
23 implementing the provisions of this act. Expenditures from the fund
24 shall be made upon warrants issued by the State Treasurer against

1 claims filed as prescribed by law with the Director of the Office of
2 Management and Enterprise Services for approval and payment.

3 B. The Commission may make expenditures from the Oklahoma NCAA
4 Division II Athletic Conference Exploration Commission Revolving
5 Fund to cover expenses related to studies, meetings, consultations,
6 and other necessary activities. Funding that is not expended by the
7 Commission may be used as necessary to perform the necessary
8 activities to create the Conference. These funds can be used for
9 both the initial operating costs of the Conference as well as funds
10 required by conference institutions to pay fees to exit their
11 current conference affiliation. Additional funding may be sought
12 from private or nonprofit sources, if necessary.

13 C. The Commission shall explore various funding sources,
14 including partnerships with private organizations, sponsorships, and
15 grants to help defray costs associated with the creation of the new
16 conference.

17 SECTION 9. It being immediately necessary for the preservation
18 of the public peace, health or safety, an emergency is hereby
19 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and
20 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

21 COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
22 April 16, 2025 - DO PASS
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