

Resolution No. 239-2026

**Council Members Starr, Bishop, Hudson
and Jones**

AN EMERGENCY RESOLUTION

Opposing Ohio House Bill 661 and any legislation that prohibits middle and high school student-athletes from earning lawful compensation from their name, image, or likeness and affirming support for student-athletes to pursue NIL opportunities while maintaining their educational and athletic participation.

WHEREAS, Ohio House Bill 661, introduced January 29, 2026, would prohibit middle and high school students participating in interscholastic athletics from earning compensation from the student's name, image, or likeness (NIL) or earning any other compensation related to the student's position on the roster of an interscholastic athletics team; and

WHEREAS, student-athletes across Ohio, including those in Cleveland, often come from working-class and low- to moderate-income families and rely on athletic participation as a pathway to educational, economic, and professional advancement; and

WHEREAS, prohibiting NIL opportunities for middle and high school student-athletes would disproportionately impact Black, Brown, and urban students who may depend on such opportunities to support themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS, NIL compensation represents a lawful economic opportunity allowing students to benefit from their personal brand, hard work, and talent without forfeiting their education or amateur eligibility; and

WHEREAS, Ohio should remain competitive with other states that recognize NIL rights for middle and high school student-athletes, ensuring that talented young athletes are not forced to relocate or leave Ohio to pursue fair opportunities; and

WHEREAS, protecting student-athletes' rights to earn NIL income promotes entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and responsible wealth-building among Ohio's youth; and

WHEREAS, the City has a strong interest in advancing policies that expand economic opportunity, equity, and fairness for young residents; and

WHEREAS, this resolution constitutes an emergency measure for the immediate preservation of public peace, property, health or safety in that Ohio's middle and high school student-athletes should be able to earn compensation from their name, image, or likeness as allowed by the Ohio High School Athletic Association, now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CLEVELAND:

Section 1. That this Council opposes Ohio House Bill 661 and any legislation that prohibits middle and high school student-athletes from earning lawful compensation from their name, image, or likeness.

Section 2. That this Council affirms support for middle and high school student-athletes to pursue NIL opportunities while maintaining their educational and athletic participation.

Section 3. That the Clerk of Council is directed to transmit copies of this resolution to the Governor Mike DeWine, House Speaker Matt Huffman, Senate President Rob McColley, and the members of the Cleveland delegation to the Ohio General Assembly.

Section 4. That this resolution is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and, provided it receives the affirmative vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to Council, it shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its adoption and approval by the Mayor; otherwise it shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

RAS:rns

2/23/2026

