



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

Representative Joseph Chaplik (R-3)

1700 West Washington • Phoenix, Arizona • 85007

Tuesday, August 29, 2023
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bipartisan Group of Legislators Call on NCAA to Reconsider Denial of Transfer Waiver for ASU Football Hopeful Jake Smith

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – A letter written by Arizona State Representative Joseph Chaplik and cosigned by 35 of his fellow legislators urges the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) to revisit its decision to deny a transfer waiver for football player Jake Smith. Their letter highlights the unique circumstances surrounding Smith’s case and calls for a fair and compassionate assessment of his eligibility to play college football.

“Jake’s situation is a prime example of the challenges student athletes have faced, exacerbated by the pandemic,” Representative Chaplik notes. **“The NCAA’s decision not only affects his career but also sets a precedent that we believe undermines its commitment to the well-being of student athletes. The transfer portal does need to be restricted, but it also needs to have exceptions for unique situations such as Jake’s.”**

Jake Smith, an accomplished football player and former wide receiver at Notre Dame Prep in Scottsdale, has faced a series of challenges that have hindered his playing opportunities. The letter details Smith’s journey, including his abbreviated 2020 season at UT Austin due to injuries and subsequent surgeries. After receiving medical clearance to play football by UT, Smith transferred to USC in 2022 to be closer to home, only to be told his foot was not healed and ruled a medical non-transfer by the USC institution. He then transferred to ASU in January 2023 in hopes of continuing his college football career.

Representative Chaplik and the bipartisan group of consigning legislators hope that their collective voice will prompt the NCAA to reevaluate its stance and correct the wrongs made by UT and his medical evaluations causing an unnecessary portal transfer. As it stands, Jake Smith has only been able to play half a season of football in three years of college and the NCAA’s decision is denying him future opportunity.

A copy of their letter is attached.

Joseph Chaplik is a Republican member of the Arizona House of Representatives serving Legislative District 3, which includes Scottsdale, Fountain Hills, and the Northeast Valley in Maricopa County. Follow him on X/Twitter at @JosephChaplik.

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Arizona State Legislature

1700 West Washington

Phoenix, Arizona 85007

August 25, 2023

Hon. Charlie Baker, President
National Collegiate Athletic Association
700 W. Washington Street
P.O. Box 7110
Indianapolis, IN 46206-6222

Re: NCAA's Denial of Jake Smith's Transfer Waiver

Dear President Baker:

We urge you to reconsider the NCAA's decision denying a transfer waiver for Jake Smith—an incredibly talented football player and former wide receiver at Scottsdale Notre Dame Prep. The circumstances surrounding the NCAA's denial are deeply troubling. Jake attended UT Austin but only played in an abbreviated 2020 season due to injuries and back-to-back surgeries. After UT cleared him to play football, he transferred to USC in 2022, but never played on the team because USC declared him a medical non-transfer. In early December 2022, Jake entered into the transfer portal, *before* the NCAA approved of its new transfer rule. Jake transferred to ASU in January so that he could play college football again.

The NCAA's ruling is punitive and unfair, and the NCAA has been rightly criticized for its recent decisions denying transfer waivers to other similarly-situated players. The NCAA should make every effort to grant waivers to student athletes like Jake with documented medical hardships and unique circumstances. It is particularly concerning that UT appears to have encouraged Jake to play football even though his injuries had not healed. To the extent the UT coaches or staff made questionable or unethical decisions, the NCAA should not punish Jake for those errors.

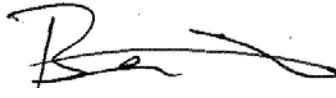
Moreover, it goes without saying that many student athletes' careers have been derailed by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is imperative that the NCAA take this into account and carefully consider the circumstances of each athlete to ensure a consistent and fair application of the NCAA's rules. The NCAA should determine whether a student athlete has a legitimate reason to seek a transfer waiver *and* whether colleges are being honest with their athletes when they make medical decisions that have a direct impact on those students' athletic success and future. Being a student athlete brings great responsibility to the student, but more importantly, the NCAA should be empowered to help students in these unique situations.

For all of these reasons, we strongly urge you to reconsider your decision of Jake's transfer appeal, which will enable him to fulfill his promising potential at ASU.

Respectfully,



Joseph Chaplik
Representative, LD 3



Ben Toma
Representative, LD 27
Speaker of the House



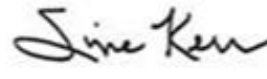
Travis Grantham
Representative, LD 14
Speaker Pro Tempore



Teresa Martinez
Representative, LD 14
Majority Whip



T.J. Shope
Senator, LD 16
President Pro Tempore



Sine Kerr
Senator, LD 25
Majority Whip



Austin Smith
Representative, LD 29



Barbara Parker
Representative, LD 10



Jacqueline Parker
Representative, LD 15



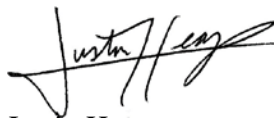
Rachel Jones
Representative, LD 17



Cory McGarr
Representative, LD 17



Laurin Hendrix
Representative, LD 14



Justin Heap
Representative, LD 10



Alexander Kolodin
Representative, LD 3



Beverly Pingerelli
Representative, LD 28



Quang Nguyen
Representative, LD 1



David Livingston
Representative, LD 28



David Cook
Representative, LD 7



Alma Hernandez
Representative, LD 20



Justin Wilmeth
Representative, LD 2



David Marshall, Sr.
Representative, LD 7



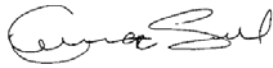
Leezah Elsa Sun
Representative, LD 22



Michael Carbone
Representative, LD 25



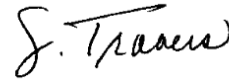
Michele Peña
Representative, LD 23



Mariana Sandoval
Representative, LD 23



Seth Blattman
Representative, LD 9



Anastasia "Stacey" Travers
Representative, LD 12



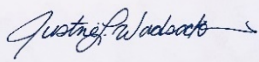
Cesar Aguilar
Representative, LD 26



Flavio Bravo
Senator, LD 26



Anthony Kern
Senator, LD 27



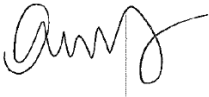
Justine Wadsack
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John Kavanagh
Senator, LD 3



Eva Diaz
Senator, LD 22



Anna Hernandez
Senator, LD 24



Catherine Miranda
Senator, LD 11



Jake Hoffman
Senator, LD 15

cc (via email):

Hon. David Schweikert, U.S. Representative, Arizona's First Congressional District
Hon. Eli Crane, U.S. Representative for Arizona's Second Congressional District
Hon. Ruben Gallego, U.S. Representative for Arizona's Third Congressional District
Hon. Greg Stanton, U.S. Representative for Arizona's Fourth Congressional District
Hon. Andy Biggs, U.S. Representative for Arizona's Fifth Congressional District
Hon. Juan Ciscomani, U.S. Representative for Arizona's Sixth Congressional District
Hon. Raul Grijalva, U.S. Representative for Arizona's Seventh Congressional District
Hon. Debbie Lesko, U.S. Representative for Arizona's Eighth Congressional District
Hon. Paul Gosar, U.S. Representative for Arizona's Ninth Congressional District
Hon. Kyrsten Sinema, U.S. Senator
Hon. Mark Kelly, U.S. Senator
Michael Crow, ASU President
Ray Anderson, ASU Vice President for University Athletics and Athletics Director
Bryan McGinnis, ASU Director of Football Operations