

OHSAA Votes Against NIL Proposal For High School Athletes



The Ohio High School Athletic Association member schools voted overwhelmingly against a referendum that would have allowed high school athletes to profit off their name, image and likeness. The referendum - which needed just a simple majority of 409 votes from 817 member schools - failed with 538 schools voting no and just 254 voting yes, the OHSAA announced Tuesday.

The proposed referendum would have mirrored NIL changes made at the collegiate level, allowing high school athletes to sign endorsement deals that they would have to disclose to their school. Athletes would not have been allowed to use the OHSAA or their school's logo, and deals would not have been allowed with companies that do not "support the mission of education-based athletics," including the industries of alcohol, casinos, drugs, gambling or tobacco.

With the referendum's failure, Ohio high school athletes remain unable to sign endorsement deals without losing amateur status, though the OHSAA indicated in a statement that it will continue holding discussions about the proposal.

"Every year, the referendum voting process shows that our member schools have a voice in this democratic process," OHSAA Executive Director Doug Ute said in a statement. "Our office was very pleased with the discussion and insights our schools expressed this spring as we met with them about each of the 14 proposals.

"If NIL is going to enter the Ohio interscholastic landscape, we want the schools to be the ones to make that determination. Whatever we do moving forward, it will include discussion on this issue with our school administrators, Board of Directors, staff and leaders of other state high school athletic associations."

If passed, Ohio would have joined nine other states that have permitted high school NIL deals, including Alaska, California, Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York and Utah.