



CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER  
JIMMY PATRONIS  
STATE OF FLORIDA

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

Dear President Baker,

I'm writing to express my sincere disappointment in the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) recent denial of Florida State University (FSU) Defensive Tackle Darrell Jackson, Jr.'s hardship waiver. As an FSU Alum, and father of two, when I came across Darrell's story – I've got to admit – it got me emotional. Afterall, Darrell put his family first and transferred to FSU to be closer to his ailing mother.

Meanwhile, the NCAA blocks his ability to play the game he loves while caring for his family? It doesn't make any sense. Why take this action? Why rob a responsible, family focused, young man of his opportunity to compete? If Darrell played, who's the victim? What's the NCAA protecting, exactly?

You've put Darrell into a lose-lose situation; I don't think he wants to be away from his mom, and I really don't think his mother wants her son to give up on his dreams. Only 1.6% of all NCAA football players make it to the professional level. If not reversed, this decision could destroy Darrell's odds of playing in the NFL. It's hard enough getting to that level. No doubt, Darrell's been preparing most of his life to take on giant players who'd love nothing more than to put Darrell's body on the ground – but I bet Darrell's never faced the kind of red tape that your organization has put in front of him.


I served in the Florida Legislature with Senator Marco Rubio, a proud Florida Gator and Miami Hurricane. The Senator is right that Darrell Jackson's waiver request needs a second look and the denials of hardship waivers across the country that involved the need to be closer to family. Again, you can tell this issue is bigger than sports when Canes, Gators, Noles, and the entire state of Florida, come together to support Darrell and his family.

As a former governor and student-athlete yourself, I hope you reopen the hardship waiver process for Darrell Jackson, Jr., and every student-athlete whom this decision has wrongly impacted.

In most cases, behind every great player, there was a family member supporting them. If the NCAA is going to start separating the importance of family from the game, I don't think it's got much of a future. You've got an opportunity to course correct – and be the hero in this moment. You should stop listening to whatever lawyer that's in your office telling you that the NCAA can only survive by shutting down this young man's dreams. It's hogwash.

Bureaucracy and red tape should not hamper student-athletes from reaching their full potential. After taking a second look at his hardship waiver, I have no doubt you will determine that Darrell should be reinstated to play immediately, and I look forward to cheering him on this fall in garnet and gold.

Sincerely,



Jimmy Patronis  
Chief Financial Officer