

## United States Senate

December 4, 2023

Mr. Boo Corrigan  
Selection Committee Chairman  
College Football Playoff  
545 East John Carpenter Freeway, Suite 1025  
Irving, TX 75062

Dear Chairman Corrigan:

Yesterday, for the first time in its 10 year history, the College Football Playoff (CFP) Selection Committee (the "Committee") made the shocking decision behind closed doors to exclude an undefeated, Power Five conference champion from the playoffs. The Committee's decision to drop the 13-0 Florida State University (FSU) Seminoles from its previous 4<sup>th</sup>-place ranking, and thereby exclude the team from the upcoming playoffs altogether, mere hours after they won the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) Championship game has rightly raised questions among millions of Americans about the integrity of the process employed by this 13-member body, which consists of just five (38%) individuals with relevant experience in coaching or playing football at the collegiate level or higher. Today, I write to demand total transparency from the Committee regarding how this decision was reached and what factors may have been at play in reaching this outcome.

Beyond the fury and heartbreak caused by the Committee's decision, there are also financial implications that must be discussed. The ACC and FSU have been denied \$2 million of revenue distribution from the CFP due to the Committee's decision to remove the Seminoles from playoff contention. While this is a significant amount of money, it is just a fraction of the total economic impact that playoff contention would have created for FSU. Beyond the benefit to the university and its athletic program, the Committee's decision will also likely have profound impacts on the future earnings and opportunities for the players.

The Committee's decision to remove FSU from playoff contention is also difficult to understand given the Committee's actions in prior years when ranking other undefeated, Power Five conference champions among the top four teams in the nation. While I understand that the Committee considered the tragic, season-ending injury to FSU quarterback Jordan Travis, I am confused as to why this was not a factor in the previous week's rankings. One week ago, the Committee chose to rank FSU as the 4<sup>th</sup>-best team in the nation, moving them up from fifth place following the road-game win

in Gainesville against the University of Florida Gators. As you know, this win occurred after Mr. Travis's injury. It's difficult to understand how FSU's next win, over the 14<sup>th</sup>-ranked University of Louisville Cardinals, would reflect poorly on the team and result in a ranking drop and exclusion from the College Football Playoffs.

There are countless other concerns and arguments that could be voiced here, but the main issue is the justified perception of an unfair system that has wrongly disregarded the known strengths of an undefeated team over the speculated impact of losing a single player. While I doubt the Committee's decision will be reversed to rightly reward FSU for its hard-fought, undefeated season as the Committee has done for other undefeated Power Five conference champions in recent years, I do believe that total transparency regarding how this decision was reached would do tremendous good for the Committee, the CFP as a whole, and the college football community.

I request that you immediately respond to this letter with the following information:

1. The "listing step" and "ranking step" votes of each member of the Selection Committee for the CFP rankings released on Sunday, December 3, 2023.
2. Any notes, recordings or reports detailing the deliberations of the CFP Selection Committee in deciding the CFP rankings released on Sunday, December 3, 2023.
3. Any emails, text messages or other written communication exchanged between the members of the Selection Committee regarding the CFP rankings released on Sunday, December 3, 2023.
4. Any emails, text messages or other written communication exchanged between members of the Selection Committee and CFP company officers, Board of Managers and/or Management Committee regarding the CFP rankings released on Sunday, December 3, 2023.
5. Any emails, text messages or other written communication exchanged between members of the Selection Committee and individuals affiliated with ESPN regarding the CFP rankings released on Sunday, December 3, 2023.
6. Any emails, text messages or other written communication exchanged between members of the Selection Committee and individuals affiliated with the Southeastern Conference (SEC) regarding the CFP rankings released on Sunday, December 3, 2023.
7. Any emails, text messages or other written communication exchanged between members of the Selection Committee and any individual(s) not affiliated with the CFP regarding the CFP rankings released on Sunday, December 3, 2023.

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8. The statistical data and game video for the Seminoles reviewed by members of the Selection Committee during the deliberation process.
9. Any documentation of recusals granted to Committee members for the CFP rankings released on Sunday, December 3, 2023.
10. The CFP ethical and conflict of interest standards.

There are hopes, dreams and billions of dollars in economic activity that hinge on the decisions made by the 13-member group you lead. Given the unprecedented nature of your recent decision, an unprecedented commitment to transparency is required. I appreciate your prompt attention to this letter and look forward to reviewing your response.

Sincerely,



Rick Scott  
United States Senator

Cc:

Chris Ault, CFP Selection Committee Member  
Mitch Barnhart, CFP Selection Committee Member  
Chet Gladchuck, CFP Selection Committee Member  
Jim Grobe, CFP Selection Committee Member  
Mark Harlan, CFP Selection Committee Member  
Warde Manuel, CFP Selection Committee Member  
David Saylor, CFP Selection Committee Member  
Will Shields, CFP Selection Committee Member  
Gene Taylor, CFP Selection Committee Member  
Joe Taylor, CFP Selection Committee Member  
Rod West, CFP Selection Committee Member  
Kelly Whiteside, CFP Selection Committee Member  
James Phillips, Atlantic Coast Conference Commissioner  
Michael Alford, Florida State University Director of Athletics