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(VILLAGER) - When the NCAA recently provided college athletes with the freedom to earn money from endorsements, monetizing social media accounts and generally selling the rights to their names, images and likenesses (NIL) to the highest bidder - effective immediately - it was met with a roar of approval.

At long last, college athletes, particularly Black athletes who have generated millions of dollars in revenue for the NCAA, finally have the opportunity to make money as matriculating students.

Since NCAA rules prevent schools from paying athletes directly, schools are directed to make sure that payments to athletes are not for their athletic achievements and to ensure that no payments are used as recruiting inducements.

On the surface, it looks like a wonderful idea. Already, some colleges athletes have signed marketing deals. Jackson State defensive end Antwan Owens,

New Marketing Deal A Mixed Bag For Athletes



Hercy Miller (left), Master P's Son, Signs \$2 million Endorsement Deal After NCAA Rule Change.
[Photo/lovebscott.com]

who is Black, signed the first reported NIL deal, partnering with a Black-owned hair care products company.

Truth be told, I'm not totally sold on the idea.

I'm overjoyed that athletes, particularly Black athletes, are getting the opportunity to make money. But everybody's not going to get paid. The ones that do make the real money will be those that look like they're pro material. Or come from well-to-do

families with strong financial backgrounds. Most of the marketing dollars are going to trickle down to a few players on every team.

The NIL is confusing to me.

I don't know what the rules are. Who's going to educate the kids about finances? I don't want to see college athletes get taken advantage of where they agree to something and sign a contract and now they're dealing with attorneys.

Who's helping the kids understand the paperwork they're signing? More than 50 percent of college basketball players are Black and nearly half of all college football players are Black. A large number of Black student athletes are raised by single mothers who work and raise their families alone. Who will advise these athletes in financial matters if no one in the household truly understands how money

works?

Everybody wants college athletes to get paid, but more structure and guidelines are necessary.

Take any kid from a poor background and ask what they're going to do with their money when they get some. Some will buy cars and jewelry with their earnings. Some may say they're going to invest. But what will they invest in? And who's going to help them manage their money? How much of

their earnings will go to agents? What about paying taxes?

Remember, these are college kids we're talking about, some of them barely out of high school. A few of them may receive large sums of money, more money than they've ever seen before. It isn't enough to trust that they all will be smart and sensible with their money.

Some athletes, like Tennessee State freshman basketball player Hercy Miller who signed a \$2 million marketing deal with a tech company, will be just fine. Miller's father, Master P, is a former rapper, entertainer, entrepreneur and millionaire many times over. Hercy Miller is already financially secure because of who his father is. How many other Black college athletes can say the same?

That's where I think the problem is going to come from. A lot of kids don't have anybody to advise them or govern them unless that person has their hand out. Agents don't work for free. And who's to say that agent will provide the best advice?

Don't get me wrong. The NIL isn't a bad thing. It can do some good and put money in some needy athletes' pockets. But if you use it wrong, it could be. It could quench your thirst. Or it could drown you.

GOP leans into racial issues ahead of midterms

BY MIKE LILLIS AND SCOTT WONG | THE HILL

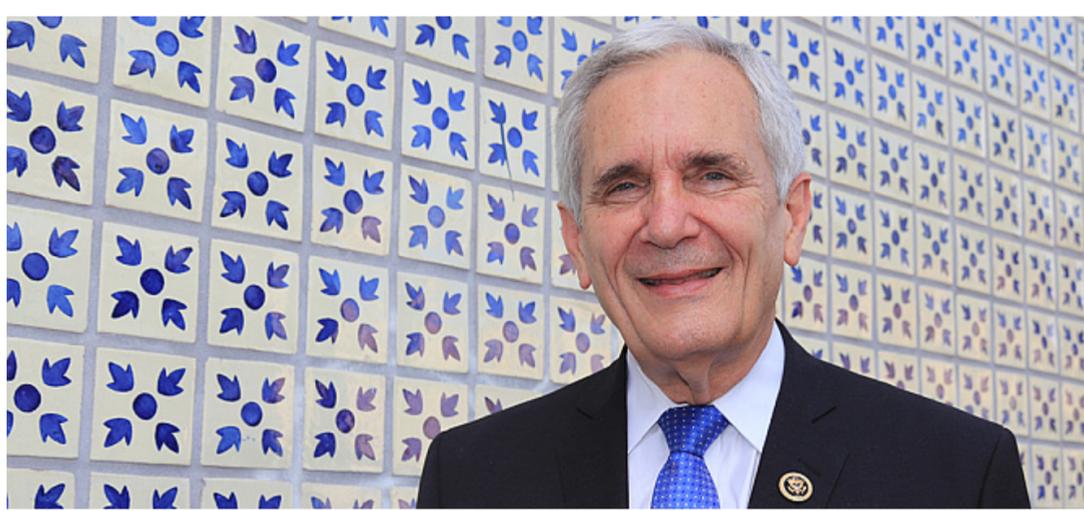
(THE HILL) - Critical race theory. Migrants at the border. Election fraud. A COVID-19 lab leak. Urban crime and calls to defund the police.

On its surface, the Republicans' nascent campaign strategy features a multipronged message attacking President Biden and Democrats on a host of dissimilar issues. At its center, however, lies the common theme of race, a thorny issue that has proved successful in animating the GOP base under the Trump administration.

It now stands at the core of GOP efforts to flip the House in next year's midterms.

Democrats are bracing for attacks while accusing Republicans of employing scare tactics at the expense of minorities.

"They're going to absolutely use that playbook from the 1980s and try to scare the mess out of their voters. And they're going to use Black and brown people as the foil. There's just no question about that," said Rep. Marc Veasey (D-Texas), a member of the Congressional Black Caucus. "It was success-



U.S. Rep. Lloyd Alton Doggett II (D-Texas, 35th congressional district)

ful for [former President] Trump, but it's always worked for them, before Trump."

Rep. Lloyd Doggett (D-Texas) sees a similar trend, saying that racially charged attacks have wormed their way into discussions on even the most unrelated topics.

"We can be having a debate about anything in Ways and Means relating to tax and they will bring in the border and immigration, and the invasion of children. It's all wrapped around fear and hate," said Doggett, a senior member of the House Ways and Means Committee.

"They don't really want to deal with issues like infrastructure," he

added. "They want to continue talking about matters that involve race and scare people to the polls while blocking our voters from getting to the polls."

The issue of race is center stage in the debate over voting rights, which this week saw Democrats from the Texas legislature descend on Washington to prevent the passage of a restrictive GOP bill.

Republicans have defended those efforts, which are being duplicated in a host of other conservative-run states, as a precaution against election fraud. Democrats see a systematic effort to disenfranchise low-income voters, a group disproportionately

made up of minorities who tend to vote Democratic.

Republicans are also highlighting the surge of Hispanic migrants at the southern border, with warnings of a spike in crime and lost American jobs. Though the origins of the coronavirus remain unknown, they're accusing China of allowing the virus to leak from a lab in Wuhan — purposefully or not — sparking the pandemic that crippled the globe over the past 18 months.

And they're bashing Democrats for supporting the Black Lives Matter movement, framing the racial justice protests — which have occasionally erupted

into looting and violence — as a blanket attack on police and the rule of law.

Trump is leading the charge on all fronts. "You have to give the police back their authority," the former president told "Fox & Friends" on Monday.

His continued popularity has led state legislatures and lawmakers in Washington to carry his message on voting in particular.

House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.), who believes he's on the cusp of becoming Speaker, has been hammering Biden and Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) on a slew of race-based issues — at press conferences, on

social media and in interviews.

In recent days, he has zeroed in on critical race theory, which he has called a "racist" policy and which recent polling shows is viewed more negatively among GOP voters the more politicians talk about it.

"The next election is going to be big, because all these things about defunding the police. All these Democrat policies that are now going in place, we're seeing the outcome: the wokeism, the open border, the inflation. Where we're going to have the biggest victory? School boards," McCarthy said during an appearance this week on BlazeTV's "The Rubin Report."



McCarthy (R-CALIF)

"Critical race theory goes against everything Martin Luther King has ever told us — don't judge us by the color of our skin — and now they're embracing it, right? They're going backwards," McCarthy added.