Putnam County residents stand against proposed data center



Putnam United members voiced their concerns during the Putnam County Commission Meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 25 (The Parthenon/ Taleigh White)

By TALEIGH WHITE
STUDENT REPORTER

This meeting isn't their first and won't be their last. Putnam United members seem determined to make their voices heard.

Putnam United, a group of residents from Buffalo, West Virginia, and surrounding areas, presented a resolution regarding hyperscale AI data centers to the Putnam County Commission on Tuesday, Aug. 25, 2026.

House Bill 2014, signed by West Virginia Governor Patrick Morrisey, has accelerated the development of data centers and silenced local voices, including those in law enforcement.

"House Bill 2014 takes all of our local authority away," Putnam County Commissioner Andy Skidmore said. "Whether it be zoning, whether it be permitting, a data center doesn't have to do anything with the county commission."

Putnam County residents voiced concerns about the proposed data center for over three hours.

"My fear is: Are we going to get flooded out as soon as we move in?" Barbie Fronk, Putnam County resident, said.

"I don't need AI in every app I use," Kyle McCausland, Pliny resident, said. "What I do need is clean water, a stable climate, and a habitable planet."

"The legislative session that will be coming up will be very important regarding House Bill 2014," Skidmore said. "We are evaluating the legal aspect of things. It is difficult to give feedback because we don't want to waste county dollars in hiring an attorney and going through that process."

Members of Putnam United have voiced concerns since early April, only a few days after Morrisey announced the proposed data center on March 27, 2026. From these meetings, the group has announced their position:

"We believe the presence of hyperscale data centers in our communities should be evaluated on more than the financial impacts alone."

"We believe that decisions about the presence of hyperscale data centers should reside with the people of the communities in which they've been proposed."

Putnam United organizer Heather Ransom said they are determined to keep meeting as a group and speak together as a community.

"This was a big thing we've been building up to," Heather Ransom, Putnam United organizer, said. "[Putnam United] will meet again on Thursday and we'll see what makes sense for us to run after next."

Taleigh White can be contacted at white992@marshall.edu.

Former Marshall athletes sue NCAA over eligibility



Marshall Athletes will continue their litigation against the NCAA as soon as their court date is placed on the docket. (AP Photo/Matt Slocum, File)

By ANTHONY DORIA
STUDENT REPORTER

12 Marshall athletes filed a lawsuit on Monday, Aug 24 against the NCAA seeking permission to play out their fifth year of eligibility during the 2026-2027 season.

This lawsuit comes after an Aug. 21 ruling from the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Wisne v. NCAA. The court ruled to pause the class-wide preliminary injunction that was filed earlier this month by a judge in Colorado, which allowed athletes who graduated high school in 2022 to get their fifth year of eligibility under the NCAA 5-for-5 rule.

For context, the NCAA made the "5-for-5" rule in early June of this year. This rule gives Division I athletes five seasons of competition over five years.

The clock begins upon full-time enrollment at their school or at the start of the academic year after the athlete's 19th birthday, whichever occurs first.

The new rule has certainly come with a lot of pushback. After the rule was announced, several lawsuits came in from multiple states (including athletes at Marshall) stating how their class was the only one that did not have the fifth year, as they had already graduated before the rule was in place.

This led to the classwide preliminary injunction by District Judge Charlotte Sweeney of Colorado. The motion stated that every athlete in that class was allowed to play their fifth year without punishment from the NCAA until a ruling was announced in the case.

Then, on Aug. 21, the NCAA picked up a win in court, as its stay was granted, which ruled that all athletes, while still able to practice, were ineligible to play in the upcoming season.

Most of the names in the Marshall lawsuit were on the original one. The names include Peyton Illderton, Meredith Maier and Blessing King (women's basketball), Bryce Blevins (baseball), Ryan Holmes and Bailey Fisher (soccer), Paige Simpson (softball), Hannah Wyler (cross country), Johanna Storm (tennis), and Dewain "Boogie" Trotter (football).

The new names on the list include football player Demarcus "Floyd" Lacey, who had over 1,000 all-purpose yards for the Herd last year, and tennis player Ksenia Mamontova.

If this case is ruled in the athletes' favor, they will be allowed to play a fifth year with no punishment. States are allowed to grant temporary injunctions that would allow them to play, as the federal lawsuit doesn't apply to lawsuits already in state courts.

The case was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of West Virginia. The athletes will be represented by attorneys Steve New, Emilee B. Wooldridge and Dusty Gwinn.

The case has been assigned to a judge and is still ongoing. More updates on the case will be provided when they become available.

Anthony Doria can be contacted at doria@marshall.edu.