

February 15, 2022

Chair Wagner, Vice Chair Knopp, and honorable committee members Senator Girod, Senator Manning and Senator Taylor:

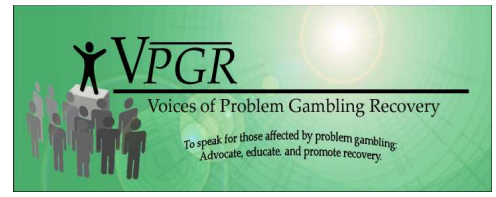
Voices of Problem Gambling Recovery opposes SB 1503, a bill that would enable the Oregon Lottery to add a college athletics gambling platform to their new DraftKings handheld mobile application.

We further ask that you support HB 4046 which would support a brief pause on the introduction of new gambling modalities while a bipartisan Joint Committee oversee research, regulatory frameworks and gambling harm mitigation in our state.

Since the Professional & Amateur Sports Protection Act (PASPA) was repealed in 2018, states became empowered to self-regulate sports gambling. There has been a marked increase in the accessibility of sports gambling in the United States, which correlates closely with increased addiction rates, though there has been comparatively little research related to gambling harm or mitigation.

We do know that:

- Black market sports gambling cannot be assumed to be reduced by legalization. This fact is evidenced by Oregon regulating recreational marijuana. Illegal sales and production have, in fact, been fueled by legalization.
- Normalization (legalization) increases prevalence of use. Accessibility is closely correlated with addiction rates.
- Individuals who currently gamble illegally and transition to a legal platform pose a higher risk of developing disordered gambling. Those consequences fall on the government and operators as per the National Council on Problem Gambling.
- Approximately 75% percent of college students gamble each year (whether legally or illegally) with about 18 percent gambling at least weekly. Student athletes and students who are sports fans gamble more than other students.
- The prefrontal cortex, which controls decision making and impulse control) is not fully formed until approximately age 25. College-aged kids are more impulsive and at higher risk for developing gambling disorders than adults.
- 6 percent of college students in the U.S. have a serious gambling problem which is associated with psychological difficulties, unmanageable debt and failing grades. This is markedly higher than the US adult population in general.
- Most adults with a gambling problem started gambling at an early age.



Coaches, athletes and student bodies have not been adequately trained or educated about sports wagering prior to launching this harmful platform and there is no provision, to our knowledge, for set-aside funding for these programs.

In the absence of comprehensive study investigating legalized NCAA gambling in Oregon, its impacts, and future directions, VPGR has commissioned a white paper on this topic through Dr. Jeff Marotta of Problem Gambling Solutions will be available for distribution during this legislative session. This document will include a current research review and environmental scan of legislative policies that set up informed recommendations.

We urge you to please withhold approving the means by which gambling harm will increase in Oregon until more research, training and education are in place.

Thank you for your kind attention in this matter.

Kitty Martz, CGRM, CGAC II, MBA
Executive Director
Voices of Problem Gambling Recovery

Sources:

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