



Senator Rob Wagner, Chair
Senator Tim Knopp,
Vice-Chair
Oregon State Legislature
Senate Committee on Rules

February 15, 2022

RE: Opposition to SB 1503

Dear Chair Wagner, Vice-Chair Knopp and Members of the Committee,

I am the Executive Director of the Oregon Council on Problem Gambling an affiliate of the National Council on Problem Gambling. The Oregon Council on Problem Gambling (OCPG) is dedicated to promoting the health of Oregonians by supporting efforts to reduce gambling-related harm. OCPG's Board Members include stakeholders from the gaming industry, the treatment and prevention field, the recovery community, and state and county administrators.

The Oregon Council on Problem Gambling opposes SB 1503 as written and any subsequent amendments/iterations that enable The Oregon Lottery to host a platform for wagering on post-secondary education affiliated athletic events. We are concerned about the impact on college and university students in Oregon, as they tend to have higher rates of problem compared to the general population, as per the Journal of Gambling Studies.

Studies in the Journal of Behavioral Addictions have shown that legalized betting on college sports contributes to the normalization of betting on sports overall and to the belief particularly among young people that if a state sanctions and operates collegiate sports betting then it must be acceptable, normal, and safe.

A 2016 NCAA survey, the most recent to have data released, showed that 55% of men had reported gambling for money in the past year and, despite student athletes' high awareness of the NCAA forbidding student athlete gambling on sports, one in four men and one in 20 women admitted wagering on sports for money in the previous year. It is expected that these figures are largely under-reported, due to the risks that students face admitting they are gambling on sports. It is also worth noting that this survey was last conducted prior to the 2018 repeal of the Professional & Amateur Sports Protection Act (PASPA). Legal sports wagering has skyrocketed since the PASPA repeal.



OREGON COUNCIL on PROBLEM GAMBLING

College student athletes have greater risk for gambling problems than the general college population, including being highly competitive; being people of color (who have disproportionately higher rates for gambling problems); experiencing higher rates of anxiety and other mental health issues; experiencing higher rates of substance use. Among current student-athletes who have ever gambled for money, 88% of men and 69% of women had their first gambling experience before entering college (NCAA, 2017). The brain's prefrontal cortex, which manages executive functioning, is one of the last areas to develop (approximately age 25).

In summary, by opposing SB 1503, you would be sending a message that you value the health of student athletes and young adults, in addition to the integrity of the game, over monetary gain. You would also be setting a precedent on not opening a potential slippery slope with wagering on other forms of amateur athletics.

We know that you share our goal to minimize gambling related harm, and hope that you will reach out OCPG as a resource should you have any questions. We encourage you to conduct independent prevalence studies and have a mutually exclusive regulatory framework in place to mitigate gambling harm before introducing a new platform or product.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Gina A. Parziale'. The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Gina Parziale
Executive Director