



PETER COURTNEY
President of the Senate

Senate Committee on Rules

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TESTIMONY BY SENATOR PETER COURTNEY

SB 1503

February 15, 2022

Chair Wagner, Vice-Chair Knopp, members of the Senate Committee on Rules, thank you for hearing my testimony today. My name is Peter Courtney. I am a state senator. I live in NE Salem.

I am here to testify in support of SB 1503.

SB 1503 would allow Oregonians to safely gamble on college sporting events by moving bets from the risky black market to the legitimate Oregon Lottery.

Illegal college sports betting is a billion-dollar industry. The American Gaming Association estimated in 2018 that black market sports wagers totaled over \$150 billion in the United States. \$10 billion was bet on NCAA March Madness tournaments alone.

A 2020 survey showed 52% of U.S. sports bettors participate in the illegal market, including through offshore sites and illegal bookies. 82% of these bettors were surprised the websites they were using were illegal.

Illegal betting can be dangerous for Oregonians. These illegal websites are not regulated and can expose gamblers to potential fraud or theft. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime this year called illegal betting "not only a major driver of corruption in sport, but also a major channel for money-laundering."

Oregon needs regulations and oversight for college sports betting.

Although college sports betting is common, Oregonians don't have a way to place their bets legally. The unregulated black market only encourages high wagers and unsafe betting practices.

The Oregon Lottery already regulates and handles betting on professional sports. More than 150,000 bets were wagered safely through the Oregon Lottery during last year's Super Bowl alone. These bets were made using a system that:

- Makes sure the bettor is over 21.
- Provides tools that support responsible gambling.
- Helps connect players with addiction treatment.

In addition to making gambling safer and more regulated in Oregon, SB 1503:

1. **Allows Oregon to better monitor and track gambling,** letting us target addiction treatment services more accurately.
2. **Funds new Oregon Opportunity Grants.** The -2 amendment dedicates all revenue generated by college sports betting to the Oregon Opportunity Grant fund. This new revenue is estimated to add up to 3,000 new grants for low-income college students.
3. **Safeguards our college athletes by prohibiting bets on the performance of individual athletes** with the -1 amendment.

Oregonians already bet heavily on college sports games. SB 1503 protects them by moving their wagers to a system that is safer, stricter, and more transparent. I hope you will join me in supporting the bill.