



October 17, 2019

The Honorable Larry Obhof
President, Ohio Senate
Statehouse
Columbus, Ohio 43215

The Honorable Larry Householder
Speaker, Ohio House of Representatives
77 S. High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear President Obhof and Speaker Householder,

On behalf of Ohio's 13 Division I NCAA institutions, including the more than 6,400 student-athletes who represent our schools, we appreciate the opportunity to share with you our thoughts and concerns regarding S.B. 111/H.B. 194 and the move to legalize sports gaming in Ohio.

In light of last year's Supreme Court decision, we understand the movement by individual states toward the legalization of sports betting. A number of states have already approved sports gaming, providing operational blueprints and paths to address the myriad of issues that gambling presents.

While the broad subject of sports gaming should be addressed with caution and restraint, our focus is on collegiate sports gaming.

We are opposed to any form of collegiate sports gaming in the State of Ohio.

Collegiate athletics should be exempted from S.B. 111/H.B. 194 and any other proposals in the Ohio General Assembly. Permitting gambling on college sports in Ohio poses risks of increased incidents of problem gambling, threats to the mental and financial well-being of our student populations and the integrity of university athletic programs.

We encourage you to follow the lead of more than a dozen other states that have prohibited some or all collegiate sports gaming. This includes states like Arizona and Oregon (prohibit all collegiate gambling), and New Jersey and Illinois (prohibit sports gaming for in-state colleges and universities). Kentucky's proposed legislation also carves out sports gaming for in-state institutions.

Further exposing Ohio's nearly 650,000 college and university students to gambling has the potential to intensify a trend of problem gambling among our student population. For the student-athletes that represent our state's institutions, sports gaming presents new and undue pressures. The attached collegiate sports wagering brief outlines our concerns further, including a set of recommendations.

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Thank you again for this opportunity to outline our collective view on sports gaming in Ohio. We also offer our assistance as your conversations move forward.

Sincerely,



Larry Williams
Director of Athletics
Akron University



Bob Moosbrugger
Director of Athletics
Bowling Green
State University



Mike Bohn
Director of Athletics
University of Cincinnati



Scott Garrett
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Mike O'Brien
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Bob Grant
Director of Athletics
Wright State University



Greg Christopher
Vice President for Administration,
Director of Athletics
Xavier University



Ron Stollo
Executive Director of
Intercollegiate Athletics
Youngstown State University

Cc: All members, Ohio Senate
All members, Ohio House of Representatives
Governor Mike DeWine
Chancellor Randy, Gardner, Ohio Department of Higher Education



Collegiate Sports Wagering

Ohio's Division 1 Universities are opposed to collegiate sports gaming/wagering in the state of Ohio. Collegiate athletics should be exempted from the proposals considered by the Ohio General Assembly. Permitting collegiate sports gambling in Ohio poses risks of increased incidents of problem gambling, threats to the mental and financial well-being of our student populations and integrity of university athletic programs.

Problem Gambling

- Expanding sports wagering on collegiate athletics has the potential to intensify a trend of problem gambling and correlated risky behavior among the age demographic of our student populations.
- Younger adults, males ages 18-44, are more at-risk for problem gambling; a consistent trend in data provided by Ohio for Responsible Gaming.
- In 2018, an estimated 6% of college students were found to be pathological gamblers.
- Compared to non-gambling counterparts, college students who gamble have also reported higher incidents of other risky behaviors including binge drinking, marijuana use, cigarette use, illicit drug use and unsafe sex after drinking.

Mental and Financial Well-Being

- Ohio for Responsible Gaming reports in survey results that at-risk/problem gamblers in Ohio are the most likely group to feel that they might have an alcohol or drug problem and also report being seriously depressed.
- Extrapolating the percentage of college students found to be at risk for pathological gambling, this leaves an estimated 5,880 students in the State of Ohio more likely to be seriously depressed with a risk of suicide.
- Student populations are particularly vulnerable to gambling as many of whom have the resources, proximity, free time, and desire to become involved.
- There are more than 12,000 students who receive Pell grants and almost 32,000 recipients of federal student loans on our campus. Robust financial literacy and safeguards must be in place so that vulnerable students do not misuse financial aid.

Integrity

- For many years, the NCAA has had bylaws restricting sports wagering because sports gambling not only threatens the integrity of the game but is also a point of entry into other problematic behaviors.
- To guard against the negative impact of sports wagering, universities would need to invest in expanded training, monitoring, and compliance programs to support our student-athletes, coaches, staff, faculty and broader campus community.

¹ <https://casinocontrol.ohio.gov/Portals/0/xNews/uploads/2017/10/18/PGSurveyrelease101817.pdf>

² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29058167>

³ <http://www.ncpgambling.org/files/NPGAWcollegefactsheet.pdf>

⁴ <https://org.ohio.gov/Portals/0/pdf/2016-17-Ohio-Gambling-Survey-Presentation.pdf> pg. 39 & pg. 43

⁵ https://www.ohiohighered.org/sites/ohiohighered.org/files/uploads/hei/data-updates/PH_2018.PDF

Recommendations for S.B. 111/H.B. 194

- Prohibit collegiate sports gaming/wager in Ohio.

If collegiate sports gaming/wagering is permitted in Ohio, additional language is needed:

- Prohibit proposition and in-game bets in collegiate sports betting/wagering. Limit collegiate bets/wagers to the outcome of games.
- Prohibit any sports gaming/wagering using student financial aid moneys.
- Within the problem sports gaming/wagering treatment and addiction fund(s) being created in the legislation, the state should create a broad-based educational program for students on the dangers and risks associated with sports gaming/wagering. The program should include mental health and wellness in addition to financial literacy. Institutions of higher education should be given permissive authority to augment the state program with their own student-based programming.
- Ensure that the Ohio Casino Control Commission be the regulatory and enforcement entity for sports gaming/wagering.
- Require the regulatory entity for sports/gaming/wagering to set minimum and maximum bets/wagers for collegiate gaming/wagering.
- Prohibit collegiate sports gaming/wagering by any university athlete or university athletic staff, and direct the regulatory body for sports gaming/wagering to create an exclusion list for those persons in consultation with colleges and universities.
- Require that any illegal, irregular, or suspicious activity found by the state's regulatory entity be shared as soon as is practicable with affected entities including universities and colleges to facilitate cooperation and enforcement actions.
- Include that anyone violating the law with regards to sports gaming/wagering is also in violation of Ohio Revised Code section 2915.05 (Cheating – corrupting sports) to clarify that enticement to corrupt a sporting event's outcome is a felony.