



THE DRAKE GROUP

Advancing Positive Legislative
Change In College Athletics



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Issue Report #4

Confronting the Biggest Danger to College Sport – Gambling

“State regulation is faint-hearted and half-baked. That’s why we need a national standard — not to ban gambling — but simply to take back control over an industry that is out of bounds.” Senator Richard Blumenthal



Dear [first name],

The Drake Group (TDG) works with Congress on critical issues related to the conduct of collegiate athletics programs. At the beginning of each academic year, we report on the top ten concerns we are addressing with members of Congress and executive agencies.

Issue #4 – Gambling in College Sport. Gambling on sports in the U.S. was prohibited up to 2018 when the Supreme Court ruled that the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act was unconstitutional. The states began to control gambling, looking to tax gambling as a new revenue source—38 states have legalized it to date. An estimated 7 million people in the U.S. have a gambling problem, with one in five problem gamblers having attempted suicide, according to the [National Institutes of Health](#) and [National Council on Problem Gambling](#). It appears that the gambling industry has adopted the tobacco industry heavy

advertising playbook, and the result has been the same—a catastrophic threat to public health. At highest risk for addiction are college age men and women.

- 71% of students living on campus are bettors and tend to bet at a higher frequency,
- 41% of college students who bet on sports have placed a bet on their school's teams,
- 35% have used a student bookmaker.
- Athletes are at high risk for sports gambling because of their competitive personalities and they are also prime targets for match fixers.
- 55% of male athletes and 38% of female athletes had placed bets in the last 12 months according to a [2016 study](#).

Gambling is an existential threat to competitive sport if fans believe the outcome of contests are rigged.

Congress is starting to work on this issue with Representative Paul Tonko (NY-D) taking the lead in the House and Senator Richard Blumenthal (CT-D) in the Senate having teamed up to sponsor the Supporting Affordability and Fairness with Every Bet Act (SAFE Bet Act). Blumenthal recently stated “State regulation is faint-hearted and half-baked. That’s why we need a national standard — not to ban gambling — but simply to take back control over an industry that is out of bounds.” Key elements of the bill which are related to college sport:

- Advertising: Prohibits sports betting broadcast advertising between 8am – 10pm local time.
- Prohibits sports betting advertising during live sporting events.
- Prohibits sports betting advertisements designed to induce gambling with “bonus”, “no sweat,” “bonus bets,” “odds boosts”, or similar promotions.
- Prohibits sports betting advertising designed to induce use of gambling products by showing audience how to gamble or explaining how wagers work.
- Generally, prohibits bets on amateur sports, with some exceptions for Olympics, Paralympics, and College Sports.
- Prohibits all proposition bets featuring college and amateur athletes.

[See full text here.](#)

What The Drake Group is Doing About This. Following the 2018 Supreme Court decision, TDG met with Senator Blumenthal, a legislator with keen interest and expertise on this issue, introduced him to a global expert in sports gambling, and encouraged his office to address the issue. In addition to the SAFE Bet Act, earlier this year the Senator filed the [GRIT Act](#) (with Representative Salinas (OR-D)) to address funding for gambling addiction treatment programs. It is unlikely that either bill will get to the floor for a vote prior to the end of the 118th Congress on January 3, 2025.

Between now and then we will meet with both offices to discuss how we can assist by educating offices of other members from both sides of the aisle who are serving on the Committees responsible for bringing the bill to the floor. At that point we will ask Drake members or organizational allies to contact their respective representatives and senators to urge their support. This is the process we follow with all bills endorsed by TDG.

Asking for Your Support. If you aren't a member already, please consider becoming a dues-paying member/supporter of TDG to help advance these efforts. Membership is nominal (\$10/students, \$35/faculty, \$50/general) and gifts in any amount are appreciated. [We welcome you to do so here](#). These funds are used to pay for student research, operate our communications platforms and fund limited volunteer trips to meet with members of Congress (90 percent of our work educating Congressional staff members is via Zoom communication).

We do what we do because we believe in the extraordinary developmental impact of intercollegiate athletics on participants — confidence, discipline, work ethic, and more. We also believe in athletics because it contributes to a vibrant campus community and is part of the 'glue' that keeps alumni involved in higher education. We must keep these benefits while we solve the challenges created by the commercialization of college sport.

Thanks for your interest in our work and considering this request. We'd appreciate your help.

Gratefully,

Donna



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If you missed our first three Issue Reports, you may access them here:

[Issue Report #1 — Proposed Antitrust Settlement – Huge Financial Implications for College Sport](#)

[Issue Report #2 — Failure of the U.S. Office for Civil Rights to Enforce Title IX](#)

[Issue Report #3 — Confronting the Failure of the NCAA Enforcement Process](#)