

Members of the Nebraska Legislature,

Online sports betting has expanded rapidly since a 2018 Supreme Court decision paved the way for its legalization. As access to mobile sports betting continues to rise, the negative impact of having instant access to a gambling device 24 hours a day has become abundantly clear. In the past few years, the popularity of mobile sports betting apps from out-of-state operators like DraftKings, FanDuel, Caesars, and even ESPN has exploded. These apps attract an influx of new gamblers who never otherwise would have placed bets with a bookie or even spent time in casinos.

Legalizing online sports betting in Nebraska would turn every cell phone, laptop, and tablet into a gambling device, available 24/7. Online sports betting can lead to new people developing gambling disorders, puts young men in the addiction bullseye, and will take money away from Main Street Nebraska businesses. We urge members of the Nebraska Unicameral to reject these bills.

There are several specific features of online sports betting that make it likely to lead to faster addiction. When some bet on sports, they tend to perceive their bets as safer and more informed by their own judgment. In reality, [96% of online sports bettors](#) lose money gambling.

Mobile sports betting is not just betting on the outcome of the next game. It allows betting on every action in a game at speeds as fast as slot machines. The “action” is constant. Rapid gambling like mobile sports betting means both higher addiction rates and higher revenues for out-of-state gambling operators. These operators also push “parlay bets,” which require multiple outcomes to be met to win, worsening the odds for gamblers and increasing profits for operators. The operators of these platforms have [spent billions of dollars](#) in advertising, with some [running misleading claims of “risk-free” bets](#) to entice users to join their platforms.

Since sports betting started to become more widely legalized, the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) [reports](#) the risk of gambling addiction has grown by 30%. The NCPG has also seen a [150% increase](#) in calls to their gambling helpline, a staggering increase directly attributable to the dangers of having such instantaneous access to sportsbooks. The main driver behind these calls? Young people. Online sports betting puts America's young people in the addiction bullseye.

Young people – particularly young men – are at high risk of becoming addicted to gambling. A [Rutgers University study](#) published last year found that individuals aged 18-44 were most likely to be high-risk problem gamblers, with an alarming [6% of college students](#) having lost more than \$500 in a single day as a result of online sports betting.

[According to the NCAA](#), about two-thirds of college students have bet on sports, and most of them are not of legal age to do so. [Research](#) shows that 20% of college students have already spent financial aid on gambling. And states like Iowa that have legalized online sports betting have seen a dramatic increase in betting by student-athletes, calling into question the integrity of collegiate athletics.

In addition to leading to higher addiction rates, online betting will also cannibalize economic activity for Main Street Nebraska businesses. If the predictions by the proponents of online gaming are correct, Nebraskans would have to lose [\\$160 million](#) they would otherwise spend boosting Nebraska's economy and supporting our main street businesses. This would result in roughly \$11 million lost in sales tax revenues and a negative impact on lottery revenues.

States like Texas and even California have held off on legalizing online sports betting. California recently rejected online sports betting with more than 80% of voters voting no. Reports called it an "epic repudiation of online gaming and online sports betting." Nebraska just legalized casinos at race tracks for the promise of property tax reduction. Legislators would be wise to allow a few years to see if that promise is delivered before taking another risk to the detriment of our youth and small businesses.

Sincerely,



The Honorable Tom Osborne



The Honorable Kay Orr



State Auditor Mike Foley



Senator Pete Ricketts