



HCR3002

Senate Judiciary Committee

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Chair Larson and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, my name is Mark Hagerott, and I serve as Chancellor of the North Dakota University System. I'd like to provide this written testimony on HCR 3002, as the NDUS and its institutions have concerns surrounding the effects of sports betting and oppose HCR3002 as this could affect our student-athletes.

The House Judiciary Committee gave this bill a Do Not Pass (9-4) after recommending amendments that would have limited sports gambling to professional sports only, thereby excluding high school and college sports. Unfortunately, the House Chamber rejected the amendment and then passed the resolution by a vote of 49-44.

The proposed language to “authorize sports betting to be conducted in the state and licensed and regulated by the state” could potentially include collegiate athletes on full ride scholarships in North Dakota colleges and universities.

Last biennium, I convened a meeting of the eleven campus presidents, and all eleven were adamantly opposed to a similar sports betting bill and requested that I carry this information to you.

Why, in general, do campus presidents pass on their concerns?

We believe that opening the door to college sports betting in our state could have massive negative implications to our students that puts the safety and welfare of our students and even their families at risk. In states that have allowed this, students have been exposed to illicit agreements and financial benefits that not only put them at risk but challenged their integrity and the purity of those sporting events.

On the face of it, sports betting potentially undermines the integrity of the game and renders unpaid athletes vulnerable to money flowing through their respective games and contingent on their performance.

On behalf of the NDUS college presidents and myself, I respectfully recommend a “do not pass” on HCR3002. However, should the Committee feel compelled to pass HCR3002, I respectfully request that lines 24 & 25 be amended to read “3. ~~Shall~~ May authorize sports betting on ~~athletic or sporting events not sponsored by a college or university~~ professional sports to be conducted in the state and licensed and regulated by the state.”

This concludes my testimony for HCR3002, and I will stand for questions from the Committee. Thank you.