



NORTH DAKOTA

Family Alliance LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Testimony Opposing House Concurrent Resolution 3002

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Good morning, Chairman Klemin and honorable members of the House Judiciary Committee. My name is Jacob Thomsen, and I am a Policy Analyst with North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action. I am testifying on behalf of our organization in opposition to House Concurrent Resolution 3002 and respectfully request that you render a “DO NOT PASS” on this resolution.

As we all know, in May 2018, the Supreme Court struck down a 1992 federal law that effectively banned commercial sports betting in most states. As a result, many states, including ours, have been looking at potentially legalizing sports betting ever since. But at what cost?

One of the problems our organization has with legalized sports betting is devaluation of sports for its own sake. In other words, fundamentally changing the meaning of American sports. On a personal level, I have grown up watching sports my whole life. I am a former college football player, and I have a certain level of reverence for sports as a means of unity among people from all different cultures and a beautiful, (mostly) friendly way of competition. I love sports for sports.

The pervasive spread of sports betting in our country has seeped its way into the living room of every sports fan in America. One simply cannot watch a sporting event anymore without being harassed by lucrative sports betting ads saying things like, “bet \$5 and get \$150, \$200, \$250 in bonus bets, \$500 risk free, \$2,000 risk free,” and on and on. Sports conversation in many instances has been watered down to talk about how to bet. Things like, “what are the odds, is this team going to hit the over, is this game going to cover the spread?” Sports talk shows used to be about sports, not betting odds.

Another issue we have with this resolution is associated with compulsive gambling disorders. According to the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services, around 3 percent of North Dakotans struggle with compulsive gambling¹, which means around 23,517 North Dakotans have a problem with gambling that harms them and their family.

¹ KX News, *How Can You Fight Gambling Addictions in North Dakota?* (2025), <https://www.kxnet.com/news/top-stories/how-can-you-fight-gambling-addictions-in-north->

Gambling is an addiction where it seems that the way out of the problem is the source of the problem. It appears you can bet your way back out of your losses. Then, if you actually do make it out of the hole you've dug yourself into with a big win, the chances of you putting that money right back into betting with hopes of another big win are far greater than stepping away from it altogether.

A study led by Brett Hollenbeck of the UCLA Anderson School of Management found in states where sports betting has been legalized, credit scores decreased, auto loan delinquency increased, debt collection amounts increased by 8%, and bankruptcy filings increased by 28%.²

One of the unique problems with sports betting is that a person can believe they can predict what is going to happen, based on their knowledge of sports. However, anyone who watches sports can attest to the fact that anything can happen. This type of betting is targeted at the demographic of younger males, in their 20s and 30s, which can be found through the alarming increase in calls from their age group to problem gambling centers.³

Speaking as a young male in the demographic that sports betting is targeted to, I can attest to the fact that I think I know more about sports than I probably do. I can understand why the marketing strategies of these sports betting companies are attractive. I mean, if I can turn \$5 into \$250 without any effort, why wouldn't I? All I have to do is know something about sports. But to boost the hubris even more, an ad from Hard Rock Bet states, "You don't need to know everything about every sport, - all you need is a feeling and a phone."

There is a quote from a user on Reddit that sums up this problem, "I just don't get it man .. literally every parlay I've ever done I ALWAYS miss by 1-2 picks. Have lost thousands this month I just don't understand [what] I'm doing wrong man."⁴

Finally, if we look to the west at our neighbors in Montana, tax revenue generated from sports betting was only equivalent to .05 percent of their general fund spending in 2023⁵, which is the

[dakota/#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20ND%20department%20of%20Health,of%20North%20Dakotas%20struggle%20with%20compulsive%20gambling.](#)

² Hollenbeck, Brett and Larsen, Poet and Proserpio, Davide, The Financial Consequences of Legalized Sports Gambling (July 23, 2024). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4903302>

³ NBC News. (2025, January 14). *Gambling addiction hotline calls surge as online sports betting expands*. NBC News. <https://www.nbcnews.com/health/mental-health/gambling-addiction-hotline-calls-online-sports-betting-rcna145539>

⁴Reddit Post

⁵ Legal Sports Report, *Sports Betting Revenue* (2025), <https://www.legalsportsreport.com/sports-betting/revenue/>; Urban Institute, *State Fiscal Briefs: Montana* (2025), <https://www.urban.org/policy-centers/cross-center-initiatives/state-and-local-finance-initiative/projects/state-and-local-finance-initiative/projects/state-fiscal-briefs/montana>.

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last full year of records. Simply put, the tax revenue gained from sports betting is not the significant source of funding it is thought to be. Especially not in light of the terrible consequences on those who experience addiction because of this.

As elected legislators, you are in a unique position with this resolution. Do you give the power to vote on this to the public, or do you decide here and now to use your knowledge and voter confidence in your decision-making to put this idea to rest? We believe that you were elected to serve the people of North Dakota and handle issues like this in the legislative branch, rather than kick the can down the road through a ballot initiative. You understand the totality of the budget and whether revenue numbers are significant. You are elected as the best group of people to decide this issue.

Because of these reasons, North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action respectfully requests that you, as legislators, decide the issue here and give this resolution a "DO NOT PASS." Thank you for the opportunity to testify, I will stand for any questions.