



October 15, 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,

As the Ohio General Assembly continues its work on the legalization and regulation of sports betting, Ohio's public and independent university presidents strongly encourage you to exempt collegiate sports from the proposals under consideration. Permitting collegiate sports gambling in Ohio will impose a costly new compliance mandate on all institutions. Betting on collegiate sports in Ohio also could potentially compromise the integrity of university athletic programs, lead to an increase in problem and underage gambling, and put additional pressure on the mental and financial well-being of our student populations.

To responsibly guard against these significant risks, universities will need to develop and invest in expanded training, counseling, and monitoring programs to both ensure compliance and support our student athletes, coaches, and other athletics staff. Compliance programs created to deter misconduct related to sports wagering laws will have to be constructed in consideration of not only student athletes and athletic staff, but also boosters, personnel associated with gamedays, broadcast partners, medical staff, faculty, and the broader campus community. These additional programs and services will be complex and comprehensive and, as a result, expensive.

Further, "collegiate sports" is not well-defined in either piece of legislation and, as drafted, could include programs beyond National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I. Under the current definition, all of the following could be subjected to sports wagering: NCAA Division II and III, National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics programs, club sports, and emerging sports, such as the

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rapidly growing market of e-sports, that are more lightly regulated by collegiate sports associations, if at all. This overly broad definition of “collegiate sports,” while creating unnecessary and undue hardships for all institutions, will be particularly burdensome for the smallest colleges, which already lack the capacity to identify how to respond to even the *possibility* of betting on their institution’s athletic competitions. For example, Ohio has a Division III football powerhouse that is perennially in the national championship and very likely would be included in sportsbooks. However, the institution is small and does not have the overhead to dedicate full-time staff to oversee gambling regulations or ramifications.

Ohio for Responsible Gambling found that adult males ages 18-44 are more at-risk for problem gaming. A study out of Medaille College in Buffalo found that in 2018 an estimated six percent of college students were found to be pathological gamblers. When Ohio voters allowed casinos into Ohio there was a precedent set in that specific money was set aside to help combat gambling addiction. Out of the same concern, we recommend that any legislation moving forward on sports betting should include specific set asides for higher education institutions to help Ohio’s most vulnerable population, 18-44-year-old males, regardless of whether collegiate sports betting is permitted.

Ohio does not need to look far for realistic solutions to mitigating these risks. On June 3, 2019, Illinois passed sports-betting legislation similar to Ohio’s proposal but prohibited bettors from wagering on any of Illinois’s collegiate sports teams. New Jersey law also does not include collegiate betting on New Jersey teams or any collegiate event that is taking place in New Jersey. We ask for similar consideration in Ohio.

In summary, subjecting Ohio public and private university collegiate athletics to sports wagering creates more detriments for our post-secondary institutions and athletes than benefits. From increased regulatory and educational costs to an increased risk of compromised performance or trading on information in exchange for financial gain, the risks associated with wagering on what are still considered to be amateur sports, should preclude designation of collegiate athletics as a permitted form of sports gaming in the pending House and Senate legislation. Thank you for your consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,

Ohio’s Independent and Public University Presidents

Signature Pages Attached

Cc: All members, Ohio Senate

All members, Ohio House of Representatives

Governor Mike DeWine

Lieutenant Governor Jon Husted

Chancellor Randy Gardner, Ohio Department of Higher Education



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C. Todd Jones, President and General Counsel, Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Ohio

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