



Statement by Greg Smith, Executive Director of the Alliance Against Sports Gambling in Delaware to the Study Committee on Sports Gaming: May 22, 2003

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Good Morning:

My name is Greg Smith and I am the Executive Director of the Alliance Against Sports Gambling in Delaware. The alliance represents a broad coalition of groups and individuals who share a commitment to oppose any increase in gambling that would include betting on sports.

Based on your report, I would like to offer the following points for your consideration:

**Revenue-** The projected revenues seem highly optimistic given the real world experience both in Oregon today and Delaware's own problematic history with sports gaming. Oregon only generates 2.3 million in net revenue per year with 2,500 outlets and a population four times that of Delaware. Oregon also does not have to split its proceeds with tracks and casinos.

When Delaware offered sports gambling in 1976 it found that the actual revenues turned out to be only one-eighth of what had been projected.

Whatever revenue is raised by sports gambling is far outweighed by the negative message that will be sent to young Delawareans, the increase in problem gambling among our citizens, and the damage to the integrity of our sports. Given the fact that social costs are a certainty, counting on realizing the rosiest projections is a bad bet.

#### **Increasing Gambling Problems**

Real world experience indicates that legal promotion of sports gambling can grow the amount of illegal gambling. Not only do professional bookies not fear competition from the state but they welcome it. The state would become an active proponent of sports gambling, spending money advertising the new game and generating interest. Gamblers would quickly recognize the advantage of betting through a bookie who can offer both better odds and much higher payouts since the money would be untaxed.

#### **Integrity of Team Sports**

Since the revenue projections are based on all sports games including college sports, (excluding Delaware colleges), the State will trumpet the message that sports are about point spreads, not competition. The integrity of both amateur and professional athletes will be fair game for cynical mistrust. Every mistake will be viewed in a new light. Two thirds of the Delawareans polled, agreed.

Legalizing sports betting will send a terrible message to our kids as well. Sports are important to them and like it or not, they look up to athletes as role models. Mixing state promoted gambling in with their favorite sports will change the way they view these games for life.



Last March, Oakland Raider Quarterback Rich Gannon, a UD alumni, wrote to Governor Minner urging her to oppose any such legislation. He is in good company. A recent poll of Delawareans on attitudes toward sports gambling showed 70% agreed with the idea that the social costs of increased gambling from sports betting outweigh the potential monetary benefits.

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I offer one final note on the inclusion of college games. The same poll of Delawareans conducted recently found that an overwhelming majority, 78%, oppose legalizing sports gambling on college games.

Thank you for your time today.

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