

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 418 Session of 2024

INTRODUCED BY KHAN, HARKINS, WAXMAN, WEBSTER, McANDREW, SCHLOSSBERG, HILL-EVANS, PROBST, SANCHEZ, CURRY, MERSKI, GUENST, GIRAL, SHUSTERMAN AND MALAGARI, MAY 3, 2024

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON GAMING OVERSIGHT, MAY 3, 2024

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a  
2 study on sports betting in this Commonwealth, including  
3 recommended methods to further regulate the industry in order  
4 to reduce problem gambling behaviors, gambling debt and the  
5 exposure of children to sports betting advertisements.

6 WHEREAS, In May 2018, the United States Supreme Court struck  
7 down a Federal law that prohibited commercial sports betting,  
8 and in November 2018, the first legal sports bet was placed in  
9 this Commonwealth; and

10 WHEREAS, As of May 2023, 33 states have legalized sports  
11 betting, and sports betting has become a multi-billion-dollar  
12 industry; and

13 WHEREAS, In 2023, it was projected that nearly 74 million  
14 Americans planned to place a bet on the National Football  
15 League, with bets being available on all sports and other  
16 competitions; and

17 WHEREAS, Despite its clear popularity and economic benefits,  
18 some experts have correlated the growth of the sports betting  
19 industry to increases in problem gambling rates and expressed

1 concerns regarding minors being exposed to sports betting  
2 content; and

3 WHEREAS, Problem gambling may lead to repeated, uncontrolled  
4 gambling that can result in negative consequences to an  
5 individual, leading to the loss of relationships, jobs and other  
6 opportunities; and

7 WHEREAS, While 2% to 3% of adults are believed to experience  
8 problem gambling, rates as high as 10% have been estimated in  
9 college students; and

10 WHEREAS, Some sports bettors believe sports betting to be a  
11 unique form of gambling due to their knowledge of the sports,  
12 players and teams, but some experts believe that sports betting  
13 portrays an illusion of control that may lead to higher rates of  
14 problem gambling; and

15 WHEREAS, Sports betting is often based on online platforms  
16 making it more accessible than physical gambling locations where  
17 traveling or cash payments may be necessary; and

18 WHEREAS, Many sports betting platforms offer appealing  
19 promotions that could be perceived as misleading as they promise  
20 "risk free" or "guaranteed" bets where a customer must still  
21 gamble with their own money; and

22 WHEREAS, The viewing of sports is immensely popular in our  
23 culture, including among young audiences, and in 2022, more than  
24 \$300 million was spent on sports betting television  
25 advertisements; and

26 WHEREAS, Some experts believe that sports betting  
27 advertisements during sports broadcasts, particularly through  
28 the endorsement of professional athletes, could normalize and  
29 encourage sports betting to young viewers, possibly leading to  
30 problem gambling in the future; and

1       WHEREAS, Several states have enacted laws and regulations  
2 prohibiting the advertisement of sports betting targeted to  
3 minors, with Federal legislation being introduced that would  
4 prohibit all sports betting advertisements on television, radio  
5 and the Internet; and

6       WHEREAS, Sports betting is a novel, popular industry with  
7 many benefits but also many potential concerns that have led to  
8 some experts declaring it a potential public health crisis; and

9       WHEREAS, This Commonwealth has been a leading state in  
10 addressing problem gambling, and its methods may serve as a  
11 model for other states to follow; therefore be it

12       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the Joint  
13 State Government Commission to conduct a study on sports betting  
14 in this Commonwealth, including recommended methods to further  
15 regulate the industry in order to reduce problem gambling  
16 behaviors, gambling debt and the exposure of children to sports  
17 betting advertisements; and be it further

18       RESOLVED, That the study include information regarding  
19 marketing strategies by sports betting licensees, such as  
20 promotions, in-game advertising, advertising during sports  
21 broadcasts and webcasts, as well as the usage of celebrities and  
22 animated spokespersons; and be it further

23       RESOLVED, That, in developing their recommendations to  
24 address these concerns, the Joint State Government Commission  
25 consult with qualified legal counsel to ensure that the proposed  
26 recommendations would not conflict with the Constitution of the  
27 United States or the Constitution of Pennsylvania, including the  
28 First Amendment right to free speech; and be it further

29       RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission issue a  
30 report of its findings and recommendations and submit the report

1 to the General Assembly no later than 12 months after the  
2 adoption of this resolution.