



Mississippi State Capitol  
400 High Street  
Jackson, MS 39201

Via Email

January 21, 2026

RE: Opposition to Online Sports Betting (“OSB”)

Dear Gov. Reeves, Lt. Gov. Hosemann, Speaker White, Chairman Eure, Chairman Blount, and Chairman Lamar:

We write today to emphatically reaffirm our unwavering opposition to online sports betting based on the numerous negative consequences which have been clearly tied to the OSB market. The latest developments across the nation have only magnified the serious and escalating harm linked to online sports betting, further validating our stance which we have taken on this topic over the past several years. The continuing push to legalize online gambling in Mississippi has grown ever more aggressive however, the gaming industry remains deeply fractured on this issue both within our state and nationwide. Here in Mississippi, the split is clear: seven of the fifteen commercial casino operators stand firmly against online sports betting, seven support it, and one remains undecided. This division underscores the gravity of the debate and the far-reaching consequences at stake<sup>(1)</sup>.

It should be noted, as shown on the attached chart, on average, the owners in favor only have 22% of the total properties they own located in Mississippi, whereas the owners that are against online sports betting have an average of 55% of the properties they own located in the state.<sup>(2)</sup> We believe this demonstrates that the owners who are opposed to online sports betting have a greater vested interest in doing what is right for the state of Mississippi. Additionally, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and their Pearl River Resorts have also joined us in opposition to the legalization of online sports betting in Mississippi and thus are included as a signatory to this letter.

**Online sports betting will change gaming in the state, and not for the better.**

Casino gaming was legalized in the state of Mississippi in specific counties, subject to county referendum, with the belief that it would make significant capital investments in the state, create new jobs, and bring in tourism and tax revenues from outside of the state; all of which the casino industry has done for the state of Mississippi, since the first casino began operation in 1992. Contrary to this design, online sports betting would expand gaming to every county in the state without local referendums and siphon money out of state.

Currently the vast majority of revenue generated in a casino in the state stays in the state and is used by the operator to cover their operating costs and the cost of maintaining their facility. With online sports betting, the in-state operator will only be due a fee after the out of state online operator covers all their operating costs, most of which will be based out of state, and their corporate overhead.

In fact, the ability to use a phone to bet anywhere in the state, will cause a reduction in customers coming to existing casino properties. This will result in lower overall revenues, weakening the existing casinos and causing a reduction in the number of jobs in the industry. Additionally, the net incremental tax revenue will be minimal with estimates in the \$11 million dollar range<sup>(3)</sup> against a state budget of \$7 Billion. This is not a material amount.

### **Illegal Online Sports Betting Will Continue to Thrive.<sup>(4)</sup>**

Despite the widespread legalization of sports betting across the country, illegal online platforms remain a major problem. A recent report on Super Bowl betting over the last three years found that 76 percent of bets in 2023, 74 percent in 2024 and 75 percent in 2025 were placed on illegal sites. To the extent that illegal online gambling is occurring in Mississippi, it is an issue that should be taken seriously and addressed by providing law enforcement and regulators with the tools they need to eliminate it. This is what Senate Bill 2510, as introduced during the 2025 legislative session, was intended to accomplish. We are optimistic that the Senate will advance similar legislation in the 2026 session, and we hope the House will also lend its support.

### **Online Sports Betting: A Dangerous "Wrapper" for iGaming<sup>(5)</sup>**

It is clear from the precedent set in other jurisdictions that many proponents of online sports betting see it as a gateway to their ultimate goal: legalization of online casino or iGaming. In state after state, the same supporters immediately switch their focus to passing iGaming once a state legislature has approved online sports betting.

### **Online Sports Betting is a Highly Addictive Product<sup>(6)</sup>**

The rapid expansion of online sports betting has triggered a surge in gambling addiction, prompting a wave of "legalizer's remorse" among at least one governor, and state legislators. In retrospect, this crisis appears inevitable: a potentially addictive product was delivered via omni-present personal devices directly to young male sports fans—a demographic naturally predisposed to risky behavior. The industry's current reach mirrors a dark "what-if" scenario: imagine if post-Prohibition alcohol distributors possessed the data to identify vulnerable customers and the technology to place a drink in their hands anywhere, at any time. Through "in-play" wagering and frictionless, immersive designs, betting has become an all-consuming experience. The data is sobering: 16% of young bettors develop an addiction, compared to just 1% of the general population. Furthermore, between 2016 and 2024, search interest for "gambling addiction" spiked by up to 67% in states like Ohio and New Jersey. Ultimately, legalization has been shown to increase gambling spending by 369%, and irresponsible gambling rates by a massive 372% proving that the digital frontier poses a far greater risk than traditional retail betting.

### **Financial Strain on Vulnerable Households<sup>(7)</sup>**

The financial impact of legalized online sports betting has also been profound. For low-savings households, it has led to increased debt and decreased savings. In states where online sports betting has been recently legalized, bankruptcies have surged by as much as 30%. This trend has raised serious concerns about the long-term economic health of individuals and families affected by problem gambling.

### **Public Opposition to Gambling Expansion<sup>(8)</sup>**

A recent poll conducted across Mississippi in January 2025, revealed strong public opposition to the expansion of legalized gambling (60%) and mobile sports betting. The majority of respondents expressed concerns over the negative impacts of these activities, with significant support for preventing gambling in schools and churches.

As the consequences become more apparent and the supposed benefits fall short, we believe it has become more clear that online sports betting is just simply not the right next step for Mississippi.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our position on this issue.

Sincerely,

*Churchill Downs* (Harlow's Casino Resort & Spa and River Walk Casino Hotel),  
*Foundation Gaming & Entertainment* (Fitz Casino Hotel and WaterView Casino Hotel),  
*Full House Resorts* (Silver Slipper Casino Hotel),  
*Gulfside Casino Partnership* (Island View Casino Resort),  
*Palace Casino Resort*,  
*Pearl River Resorts* (Golden Moon Hotel and Casino),  
*Saratoga Gaming* (Magnolia Bluffs Casino Hotel),  
*Treasure Bay Casino and Hotel*

## Footnotes

- (1) Each owner / operator company which has signed this opposition letter may also send a separate individual letter further clarifying their position on this issue.
- (2) Excel spreadsheet attached
- (3) Mississippi Mobile Online Sports Betting Task Force Report, 12.15.2023
- (4) Special Report: Super Bowl 2025, iGambling Marketplace Report 2025., 2.17.2025
- (5) "The Lancet Public Health Commission on gambling." The Lancet. Oct 24, 2024, "A Comprehensive Review of Sports Wagering and Gambling Addiction" Jeffrey Derevensky, PhD, and Ken Winters, PhD, National Council on Problem Gaming
- (6) American Medical Association's journal, JAMA Internal Medicine "Growing Health Concern Regarding Gambling Addiction in the Age of Sportsbooks", February 17, 2025. AP News, Julie Carr Smyth, November 24, 2025. "New study measures sports betting boom, finds rise in irresponsible gambling", July 18, 2025, The Guardian, Sophie Atkinson.  
"America Made a Huge Bet on Sports Gambling. The Backlash Is Here." The Wall Street Journal. Mar 28, 2024, "Dutch MPs call for repeal of online gambling legalization." Next.io. Oct 10, 2024.  
Economic Impacts of iGaming Expansion US, Nationwide, Innovation Group, February 2025
- (7) "Gambling Away Stability: Sports Betting's Impact on Vulnerable Households." Baker, et al. Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, Oct 21, 2024
- (8) Bradley Research Group, January 2025