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March 27, 2023

Dear Academic Administrator:

As the nation's interest peaks in the 2023 NCAA March Madness tournaments, I write regarding sports betting companies' efforts to partner with universities to promote sports wagering on college campuses. According to media reports, major universities have entered into lucrative contracts with casinos and sportsbooks to encourage students to gamble on sports – raising well-founded fears about an activity that is known to be addictive.

Since the Supreme Court ruled in favor of allowing states to legalize sports betting, we have seen massive growth in the popularity of online gambling. According to data from U.S Integrity, a sports wagering integrity service, betting on major college conference sports has become an \$11 billion-dollar industry with last year's College Football Playoff drawing \$500 million in bets alone.¹ This year, 68 million Americans planned to wager \$15.5 billion on the 2023 NCAA March Madness tournaments.² The opportunity for lucrative deals has caused some casinos and sportsbooks to target universities, despite the very real harm gambling poses to students, many under the age to legally gamble.

Universities, and their athletic departments, have a duty first and foremost to protect student health. Certain factors – such as their age, stress, and past substance abuse or depression histories – make students especially vulnerable to gambling addiction. Experts have said that it can be difficult for young people to recognize their inability to gamble responsibly, so it is deeply concerning that universities are willing to partner with sports betting companies.³

¹ Amanda Christovich, "Learfield, U.S. Integrity Form College Sports Betting Watchdog," *Front Office Sports* (New York, NY), January 11, 2022, <https://frontofficesports.com/learfield-u-s-integrity-form-college-sports-betting-watchdog/>.

² "Wager on March Madness," American Gaming Association, last modified March 12, 2023, <https://www.americangaming.org/new/68-million-americans-to-wager-on-march-madness/>.

³ Anna Betts et al., "How Colleges and Sports-Betting Companies 'Caesarized' Campus Life," *The New York Times* (New York, NY), November 21, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/20/business/caesars-sports-betting-universities-colleges.html>.

Compounding matters, we have seen reports that some universities with these partnerships have done little to set up the necessary support for students who develop a gambling addiction.⁴ For example, a deal between Caesar's Sportsbook and Casinos and Michigan State University contained only \$25,000 to educate athletes on gambling, with no funds to address problem gambling among students.⁵

Given the seriousness of this matter, we request a written response to the following questions by April 27, 2023:

1. Does your institution have a partnership or contract, either directly or indirectly through a third-party, with a casino, sportsbook entity, or betting/gambling company that is intended to market sports betting to students? If so, please answer the following questions.
 - a. What are the terms of the contract or partnership?
 - b. Please provide any correspondence with the casino, sportsbook entity, or betting/gambling company regarding contract or partnership negotiations.
 - c. How much does your institution expect to profit?
 - d. Does your institution receive a percentage of any sports-betting profits made by the casino, sportsbook entity, or betting/gambling company on games played by your institution?
 - e. What does your institution intend to do with the money received from the contract or partnership?
 - f. What measures has your institution undertaken to safeguard student well-being and ensure that students gamble responsibly?
 - g. What percentage of your student population is under the legal age to gamble in your state?

2. Has your institution been approached, either directly or indirectly through a third-party, by a casino, sportsbook entity, or betting/gambling company to develop a partnership or contract that is intended to market sports betting to students?
 - a. If yes, what are the terms of the contract or partnership?
 - b. If yes, is that partnership still under review?
 - c. Please provide any correspondence with the casino, sportsbook entity, or betting/gambling company regarding any contract or partnership negotiations.
 - d. If you decide to enter into a partnership with a casino, sportsbook entity, or betting/gambling company (either directly or indirectly through a third-party), how would you protect students from engaging in risky financial behaviors?
 - e. What percentage of your student population is under the legal age to gamble in your state?

3. Regardless of whether you have a partnership or contract with a casino, sportsbook entity, or betting/gambling company, what actions does your institution take to prevent gambling by underage young people?

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

4. What services does your institution offer to students struggling with a gambling or related addiction? How much does your school invest in such services?
5. If your institution does not currently have a partnership or contract with a casino, sportsbook entity, or betting/gambling company that is intended to market sports betting to students, will you commit to never forming such a partnership or contract in the future?

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate