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PRESIDENT

August 2018

EAGLE FORUM

Leading the Pro-Family Movement since 1972

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No Fun and Games

Last May in *Murphy v. National Collegiate Athletic Association*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that federal law cannot prevent states from sanctioning and promoting sports gambling. The litigation was cloaked as a “states’ rights” issue, but was actually conceived by powerful gambling interests and corrupt politicians. While the SCOTUS decision opens the door to gambling expansion in additional states, the decision does not compel any state to legalize sports gambling.

The SCOTUS decision overturned the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act, the federal law that limited sports betting to one state, Nevada, for the last 25 years. In addition, states with limited betting — Oregon, Delaware and Montana — were grandfathered in. PASPA did not outlaw sports betting, which was already illegal. Rather, PASPA banned other states from regulating and taxing sports betting.

In anticipation of the new ruling, eight states including New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Iowa, New York, Mississippi, and West Virginia had laws prepared to legalize sports betting. Thirteen other states — California, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Michigan, Missouri, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina — have plans to consider legalizing sports betting. No states have yet outlawed sports betting.

The four major U.S. professional sports leagues, MLB, NBA, NFL, NHL plus the NCAA, urged the court to uphold the prohibition on sports gambling to protect the integrity of their games. However, some individual owners of professional teams voiced support for legalized sports betting.

The American people lost \$117 billion on state-sanctioned gambling in 2016, causing life-changing financial losses for millions of citizens. This serious national

problem will be made far worse with legal betting on athletic competitions. Americans already illegally wager \$150 billion on sports each year, according to the American Gaming Association estimates, and 32 states are expected to jump into the legal game within the first five years. Bets can be placed online even in states where gambling is illegal, but credit cards cannot be processed and the gambling cannot be advertised, but laws do not affect illegal dealers.

Sports betting is especially dangerous for American children because it normalizes gambling for kids, while it distracts them from the traditional benefits of competitive sports. Sports gambling is not limited to the final outcome of the game, but bookies encourage and promote wagering on every play within the game.

Eagle Forum will continue to defend and protect families by opposing state-sponsored gambling. We ask all Eagle Forum members to work against pro-gambling legislation in your state legislatures.

Cathie Adams
First Vice-President, Eagle Forum

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