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Gambling in Alabama 2024

Alabama State Legislators are facing renewed pressure to once again consider gambling legalization in 2024. This pressure is driven not by grassroots public demand but by a top-down political agenda. Powerful lobbyists are targeting Alabama as an untapped market, seeking profits from potential Alabamian “losers” (of their own money). We commend all attempts to enforce Alabama’s laws concerning gambling, but do not see the now-common battle cry for “regulation” as the answer. Regulation is a code word for state-sponsored legalization. No American jurisdiction has EVER documented a decline in illegal gambling after states began sponsoring gambling, regardless whether it’s lotteries, casinos, or internet gambling. Legalization only removes the deterrence. When legislators and gambling operators call for “regulation,” what they really mean is the government granting monopolies and awarding regulatory advantages to favored firms. In Alabama, among these favored firms are likely to be the same ones who have been breaking Alabama’s laws for years. Imagine rewarding the very people who have flaunted our laws and caused us to have a so-called illegal gambling public safety crisis.

To curb illegal gambling operations, enacting and enforcing stricter criminal penalties is a more effective measure than legalization and regulation. The criminalization of for-profit lotteries and casino-style gambling was successfully practiced for a large portion of American history. This does not mean illegal gambling was completely absent from society, but public institutions did their best to contain it and not promote it. They did not incentivize their citizens to lose their money gambling, as they do with predatory gambling.

Predatory gambling is when state governments partner with powerful corporate gambling interests to use a commercialized business to exploit and defraud citizens and their communities (as an example of this, did you know that state lotteries are exempt from FTC rules on truth and advertising?). The allure of a permanent revenue source for the state—for education, care for the elderly, Medicaid expansion, etc.—would continually incentivize the state to turn our own citizens into permanent habitual gamblers.

How would this happen in Alabama? Any changes to Alabama’s gambling laws would have to be approved by a statewide ballot vote to change the state’s constitution. November of 2024 is seen as the perfect ballot considering it is the general election for President and all six congressional districts are on the ballot. The idea is that a big turnout would ensure the passage of a constitutional amendment legalizing some forms of gambling. Keep in mind that state legislators are not on the 2024 ballot; by the time they are on the ballot in 2026, most Alabamians will have forgotten what happened two years earlier.



It is well-known that—if changes in our gambling laws came down to a statewide vote—the gambling industry would “buy the vote” by spending whatever was needed to misinform the public as to what they are really voting for or against. Mail outs, slick television and radio commercials, and other forms of advertising will only tell one side of the effects of legalized gambling. We must do what we can to prevent this scenario.

We must voice our opinion to our local legislators to remind them of the addiction and mental health issues, financial ruin, broken families, and the corruption associated with this industry. We must encourage them to support increased criminal penalties and enforcement of our current laws and oppose any pro-gambling measures that will come our way in 2024.