



# **Sports Wagering Best Practices to Address Problem Gambling in Vermont**

April 7, 2023

# National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG)

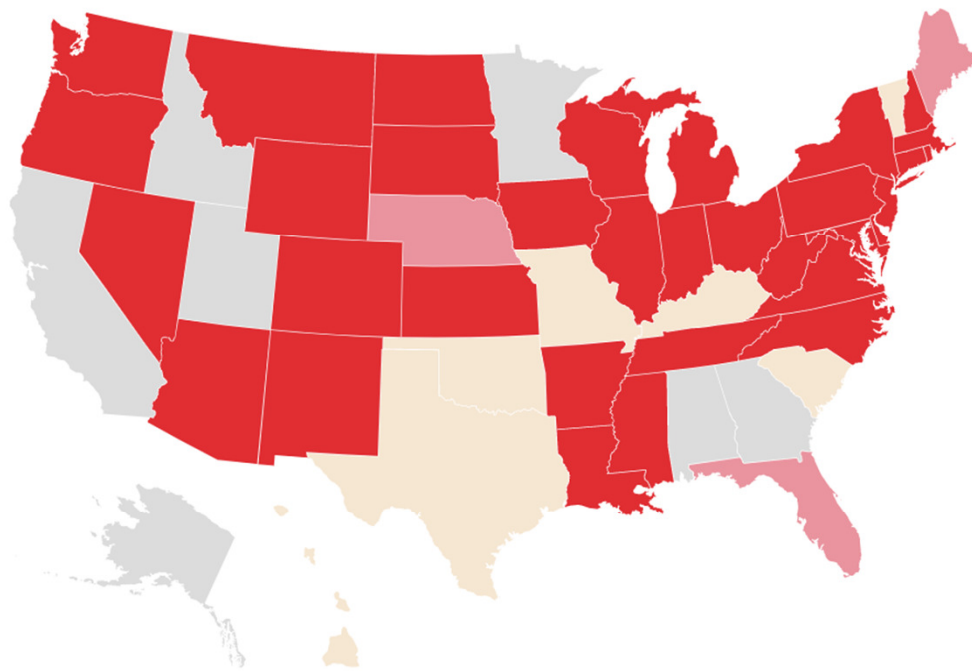
The national **advocate** for programs and services to assist problem gamblers and their families.

**NEUTRAL** on legalized gambling.

Founded in 1972.

Chapters in **35** states. Work with government, gaming industry, regulators, legislators, media & community.

# Current Sports Betting Lay-of-the-land



## SPORTS BETTING ACTIVITY

Legal Landscape as of January 31, 2023

- Live, Legal\* (33 States + DC)
- Legal, Not Yet Operational\*\* (3 States)
- Active Legislation/Ballot Initiative\*\*\* (7 States)
- No Legislation (7 States)
- Dead Legislation (0 States)

\*Live, Legal: Sports betting is legally offered through retail and/or online sportsbooks.

\*\*Legal, Not Yet Operational: States have legalized sports betting, but not yet launched.

\*\*\*Active Legislation/Ballot Initiative: Bills to legalize sports betting have been pre-filed/introduced or a voter referendum is scheduled.

# Problem Gambling in Vermont

There is an estimated 11,629 (2.2% of the adult population) of Vermont adults who are currently struggling with a gambling problem.

In addition, according to the *2021 Survey of Problem Gambling Services in the United States*, Vermont ranked 26th out of 42 states in 2021 in terms of per capita public funds dedicated to problem gambling services.

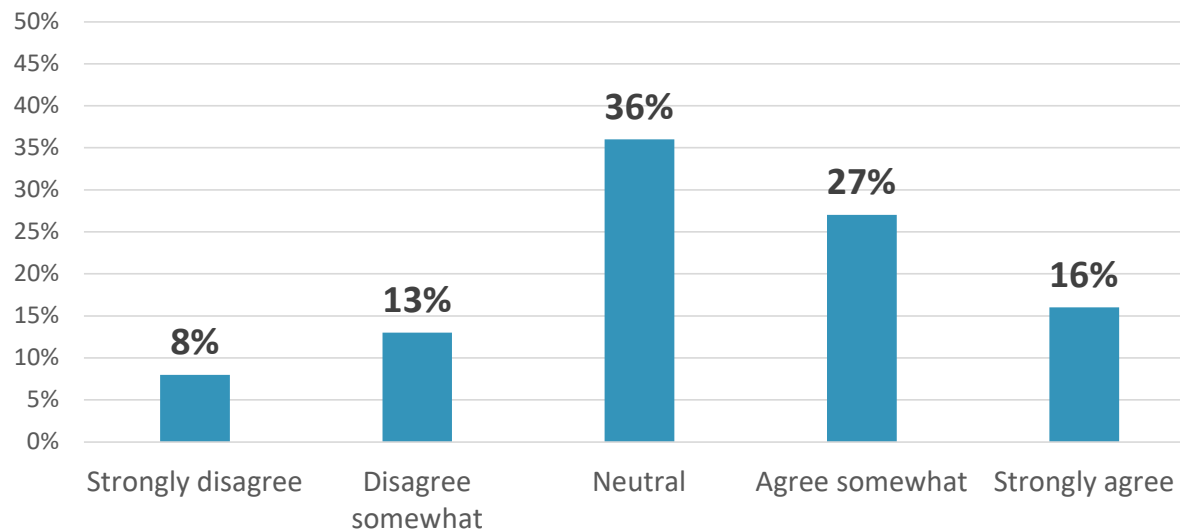
The average per capita allocation of public funds for problem gambling services in the 42 states reporting publicly funded services was 40 cents; Vermont's per capita public investment was 23 cents.

# NGAGE: National Survey on Gambling Attitudes & Gambling Experience

- The National Survey of Gambling Attitudes and Gambling Experiences
- A large-scale survey of **3,000** Americans
  - Total of 28,384 interviews
  - 500 interviews in most states
  - 100-200 sports bettors in all states
- Includes questions on:
  - Gambling participation
  - Emphasis on sports betting and fantasy sports betting
  - Problematic behavior
  - Positive play
  - Beliefs and opinions about problem gambling

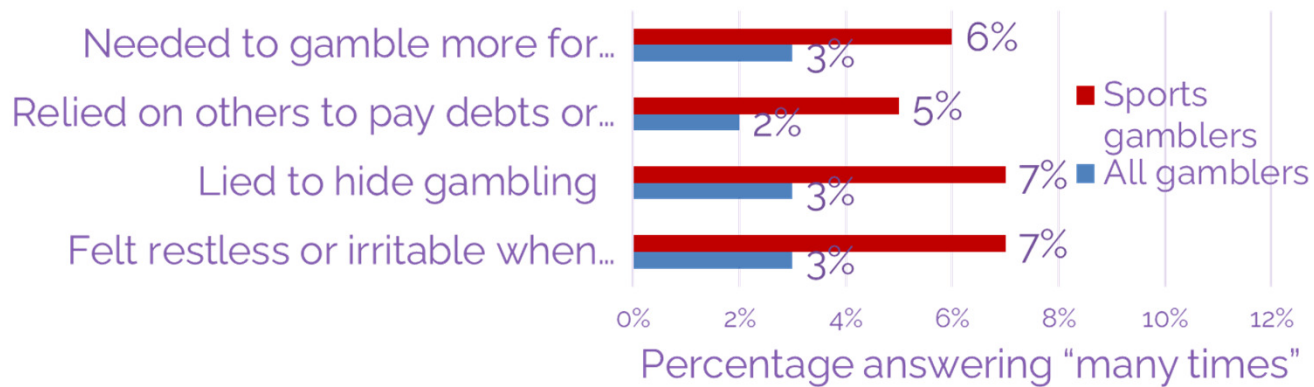
# NGAGE: Findings

**The government should do more to help people with a gambling addiction**



# NGAGE: Findings

## Past year problematic gambling activity among sports bettors



# FUNDING

We recommend that states dedicate a percentage of gross tax revenue from legalized sports gambling to the research, prevention, treatment, and recovery of problem gambling.

This funding will be essential given that the state's current limited funding mechanism.

Many states that have legalized sports gambling have devoted a portion of tax revenue to problem gambling.

For instance, Tennessee designates 5% of tax revenue from sports gambling to problem gambling services; while Virginia designates 2.5% of tax revenue from sports gambling to problem gambling services. Michigan attributes \$1 million annually from sports wagering. Massachusetts designates 9% of their tax revenue to the public health trust fund. New York contributes \$6 million per annum to problem gambling services from their sports betting revenue.

We recommend that Vermont devote at least 2.5% (not to be less than \$500,000 dollars) of gross tax revenue from legalized sports gambling to problem gambling research, prevention, treatment, and recovery services.



# Helpline

All sports wagering legislation should mandate that operators post information about the national problem gambling helpline (call/text/chat) 1-800-GAMBLER.

Accounting for the average demographic that tend to participate in sports wagering it's imperative to also account for a recent trend where persons move away from call services and more commonly use Internet-based information resources, text, or chat features. This helpline should be clearly posted on all advertisements, websites, platforms, etc.

However, shortly after the legalization of sports wagering numerous states have seen a steady increase in helpline calls, thus we encourage you to keep helpline services and expand others.

**Connecticut Sports Betting Increases  
Problem Gaming Hotline Calls**

**Virginia Problem Gambling Helpline Sees  
Spike in 2021 Call Volume Amid Industry's  
Expansion**

**Problem Gaming Help Line Calls In PA Skewed  
Younger While Nearly Doubling In 2021**

**Online betting launched in January.  
Then, calls to Michigan's gambling  
helpline spiked**

Surge in online casino play and sports betting last year was a big factor

# Annual Research Agenda

An annual research agenda should also be included within the statute.

Sample language is below from MA, one of the nation's leading problem gambling research agenda:

"The state shall develop an annual research agenda in order to understand the social and economic effects of expanding gaming in the state and to obtain scientific information relative to the neuroscience, psychology, sociology, epidemiology and etiology of gambling.

(1) a baseline study of the existing occurrence of problem gambling in the state; provided, however, that the study shall examine and describe the existing levels of problem gambling and the existing programs available that prevent and address the harmful consequences of problem gambling"

(2) comprehensive legal and factual studies of the social and economic impacts of gambling in the state on: (a) state, local and Indian tribal governments; and (b) communities and social institutions generally, including individuals, families and businesses within such communities and institutions; provided, however, that the matters to be examined in such studies shall include these but not be limited as such"

# Education

We encourage the state to incorporate problem gambling instruction which may be integrated into the curriculum of an appropriate existing course or courses for students in secondary schools.

According to data from the **National Center for Responsible Gaming**, **7% of young people** end up as problem gamblers compared to just **1% of the adult population**. Furthermore, the study states that up to **14% of children** exhibit behavior that indicates gambling could end up as an addiction.

As with most controversial topics, Rasoul told *The Roanoke Times* that he was **concerned about the kids**.

*“I had some parents approach me... there are stories of some of our youth who have really struggled with gambling addiction. Now, especially since we have allowed for online gambling to proliferate so much, it’s so easy for that to happen.”*

## Michigan Senator Introduces Bill To Combat Teen Gambling Addiction

Sen. Joseph Bellino says the bill, which sits in committee, has bipartisan support

## New Jersey Legislators Latest To Try And Pass A Gambling Education Bill

If passed, it would teach high school kids about problem gambling as well as probability

# Responsible Gambling

Legislation should require all gambling operators to have responsible gambling programs.

Operators should have a written plan with measurable objectives and an annual report that reviews their progress. This responsible gambling audit should be given to both the regulator and be available for public review.

As part of these programs, operators should be required to train all staff, with additional training for employees that have regular contact with players, in responsible gambling at their hiring and regularly throughout their employment.

In addition, operators should be required to have clear policies in place for assessing and handling situations where a player indicates they are in distress or experiencing problems.

There should also be a procedure in place to address third party (e.g., spouse, relative) concerns about players gambling behavior.

# Responsible Gambling

Require operators to provide a variety of information to players to assist them in their decision making.

This includes practical tips on how to keep gambling within safe limits, common myths associated with specific types of sports betting, information on how individual games work, how to use key responsible gambling tools, the risks associated with gambling, and signs of a potential gambling problem.

In addition, operators should be required to provide players information on their play.

Players should have easily accessible and periodic updates regarding their gambling history including time and money spent, games played, net wins/losses, as well as session information.

Players should have access to their account details including all deposit and withdrawal amounts.

Vermont should also require operators to provide players the ability to set limits on the amount of time and money they spend gambling.

# Responsible Gambling

As part of its sports betting legalization, Connecticut implemented comprehensive regulations regarding patron protection information requirements that include the tips mentioned above and requires those protections to be made available in real time to the player in easy and obvious formats by the operators.

[1] See <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2021/rrdata/pr/2021REGGE2021-002-RC.PDF> at page 64-65.

A bill addressing problem gambling received unanimous approval, **54-0**, from the **Illinois Senate** last week. If passed, the bill would force Illinois sportsbooks to provide bettors with hourly pop-up messages informing how much they've wagered.

Some information gained from the study includes:

- **68%** of adults said they'd gambled in the previous year.
- **3.8%** of adults had a gambling problem.
- **7.7%** of adults are at risk of becoming problem gamblers.

# Advertising

All sports wagering legislation should ban gambling advertising that is deemed false or misleading.

The legislation should not misrepresent the odds of winning. Operators should also not be permitted to advertise on webpages dedicated to problem gambling.

Operators should not be permitted to advertise to audiences that are ordinarily expected to be under the legal age to gamble.

Ohio:

Sports gaming advertisements must not:

- (1) Depict any individual under the age of twenty-one, except live footage or images of athletes in sporting events on which sports gaming is permitted. Any individual under the age of twenty-one may not be depicted in any way that may be construed as the underage individual participating in or endorsing sports gaming;
- (2) Target individuals under the age of twenty-one, other individuals who are ineligible to participate in sports gaming, individuals with gambling problems, or other vulnerable individuals;
- (E) A sports gaming proprietor must not advertise or promote on college or university campuses located in the state of Ohio except for generally available advertising, including television, radio, and digital advertising. Any advertisement shown to be targeting the area of a college or university campus is not generally available and will be a violation of this paragraph.
- (F) Sports gaming advertisements, including logos, trademarks, or brands must not be used, or licensed for use, on products, clothing, toys, games, or game equipment intended primarily for persons under twenty-one years of age.

<https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-administrative-code/rule-3775-16-08>

# Advertising

## Colorado:

(c) Not be described as free unless they absolutely are free. If the customer has to risk or lose their own money or has conditions attached to their own money, then the offer or bonus must disclose those terms;

(d) Not be described as risk free if the customer needs to incur any loss or risk their own money to use or withdraw winnings from the risk-free bet; and

(e) Not restrict the customer from withdrawing their own funds or withdrawing winnings from bets placed using their own funds.

## New York:

(c) Unless otherwise approved in writing by the commission, the problem gambling assistance message shall meet the following requirements: (1) for signs, direct mail marketing materials, posters and other print advertisements, the height of the font used for the problem gambling assistance message must be the greater of: (i) the same size as the majority of the text used in the sign, direct mail marketing material, poster or other print advertisement; and (ii) two percent of the height or width, whichever is greater, of the sign, direct mail marketing material, poster or other print advertisement; (2) for billboards, the height of the font used for the problem gambling assistance message must be at least five percent of the height or width, whichever is greater, of the face of the billboard; (3) for video and television, the problem gambling assistance message must be visible for either: (i) the entire time the video or television advertisement is displayed, in which case the height of the font used for the problem gambling assistance message must be at least two percent of the height or width, whichever is greater, of the image that will be displayed



# Self-exclusion

Self-exclusion is arguably one of the most important problem gambling tools to offer customers. Vermont should create a statewide program, to be overseen by the sports wagering regulator and allow for all gaming verticals (fantasy and lottery) to be included. The law should bar operators from sending any promotional materials to self-excluded players and ensure those players receive information from the state on how to receive help for gambling problems.

In addition, players should be required to apply to be reinstated on their own initiative at the conclusion of their self-exclusion period, and not be incentivized or subject to triggers in communications from operators.

Best practices for a self-exclusion program also require a reinstatement review with a trained mental health professional, ensuring customers are empowered with tools and information about how to resume gambling in a healthy and protected way.

# Data

Play data from regulated internet gambling sites should be publicly available through the regulatory agency to qualified researchers.

Data must be anonymized to remove personally identifying information, consistent with Federal and state privacy, intellectual property and freedom of information laws.

A customer should be able to request and receive all of their account information.

# Payments

Exclusion: Any electronic/digital/cashless payments method the site accepts should allow players to exclude.

Data: Data on payments made by players should be publicly available through the regulatory agency to qualified researchers. Data must be anonymized to remove personally identifying information, consistent with Federal and state privacy, intellectual property and freedom of information laws. A customer should be able to request and receive all of their account information.

Credit: Players cannot obtain a line of credit from the site.

# Contact Us

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