



The National Hockey League strongly opposes the passage of Bill C-290. This Bill jeopardizes the integrity of professional sports and the public's trust and confidence in professional sports in North America.

The NHL continually strives to represent the ideal that hard work, fair play and adherence to the rules in competition are integral to success both on the ice and off the ice. During its nearly 100 years of existence, the NHL has steadfastly opposed the spread of gambling and/or gambling-related activities tied to the results of NHL games. In that regard, it is significant to note that the National Hockey League strictly prohibits its employees and all players from betting on NHL games.

The NHL was a vocal and active proponent of the 1992 United States federal legislation called the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act ("PASPA"). Through its passage of PASPA, the U.S. Congress recognized the obvious and necessary harms that will follow if government sponsored and/or regulated sports gambling is permitted to proliferate. PASPA makes it unlawful to have a gambling or wagering scheme based on games in which amateur or professional athletes participate. In 2009, the NHL together with the NBA, NFL, MLB and NCAA successfully relied on PASPA's prohibitions in seeking federal court intervention to halt the spread of government sponsored and/or regulated sports gambling in the State of Delaware. The Third Circuit Court of Appeals declared that Delaware's proposed single-game sports gambling scheme was a violation of PASPA and enjoined its implementation.

In the summer of 2012, the NHL again joined with the NBA, NFL, MLB and NCAA to invoke PASPA and in their collective opposition to the legalization of sports gambling in the State of New Jersey. The proposed sports gambling legislation in New Jersey seeks to provide licensed casinos or gambling houses the right to operate "sports pools" and accept wagers on any sports event, except collegiate games held in New Jersey or games involving New Jersey

colleges. This case is currently pending in the U.S. Federal District Court for the District of New Jersey.

The NHL provides family entertainment and the League has worked tirelessly to earn and maintain a reputation for the absolute integrity of its competition for its fans. Government sponsored and/or regulated single-game sports gambling threatens to compromise the reputation and integrity of the NHL's product, and could seriously undermine our fans' trust and confidence in honest competition. The widespread and legal availability of gambling on single-game results will inevitably lead to concerns (and possibly the widespread perception) that NHL games are not completely legitimate, including allegations asserting the possibility of "point-shaving" activities and the manipulation of player injury and participation practices. Making single-game sports gambling a widespread legitimized institution will portray an image to our fans, including the youth, that gambling and sports are not only an accepted combination, but a natural one, so that if they enjoy sports, they will also enjoy gambling.

Furthermore, we believe that legalizing single-game sports betting will necessarily increase the overall volume of sports betting by Canadians. Those who bet using offshore internet gambling establishments or with illegal bookies will likely continue to do so because government regulated casinos will never be able to offer the same convenience or odds as offshore and illegal domestic betting organizations. Also, illegal gambling operators will be able to offer credit terms for participants that are more attractive and accessible. Yet at the same time, the legalization of single-game sports betting will activate a nascent and unrealized interest in betting, and it is inevitable that many of those people who become attracted to sports betting will begin to gamble more and more frequently, and they too will eventually want to place bets through illegal means. The only effective way to end illegal gambling in Canada is by better enforcement of its laws. And the only way to stop offshore betting is for Parliament to pass laws, and for governments to establish tools for law enforcement, that will work to curtail offshore betting havens, similar to the steps taken in Canada and the U.S. to curtail illegal tax havens. Sports gambling is an addictive, high stakes activity and legalizing single-game sports gambling will not change the lure of better odds and the opportunity for a gambler to win more money offshore; it will just create more gamblers.

The integrity of our game and our competition is essential to the popularity of NHL hockey with our fans and with young people throughout Canada. We firmly believe that legalized sports betting threatens to compromise that integrity, and that the single-game betting scheme that Bill C-290 seeks to decriminalize poses a particularized and unique threat in that regard. Such wagering poses perhaps the greatest threat to the integrity of our games, since it is far easier to engage in “match fixing” in order to win single-game bets than it is in cases of parlay betting (as currently exists in Canada), where bets are determined on the basis of multiple game outcomes. This issue is not fundamentally about dollars bet or additional revenues generated for the provinces. If single-game sports betting becomes a publicly fostered and sponsored institution, then the very nature of sports in North America (including in the National Hockey League) will change, and we fear it will be changed for the worse.