



Bill C-218: An Act to amend the Criminal Code

Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Banking,
Trade and Commerce

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To the Members of this Committee:

theScore is pleased to have this opportunity to submit our second brief for the study of Bill C-218, again affirming our full support for the legalization of single event sports betting in Canada and urging the expeditious study of the legislation as we approach the summer adjournment of both chambers in Parliament.

As lockdown measures continue in the provinces, dramatically impacting economic activity, the impetus and rationale for a competitive, safe and regulated market for sports betting has never been more apparent. The passage of this bill will provide an urgently needed revenue stream to provincial governments and create ample well paying, full time jobs that provide opportunities for skills development and career advancement. And it will accomplish all this while expanding responsible gaming measures and combating the illegal market that is currently thriving both here in Canada and globally.

We come to this public policy dialogue as a Canadian innovation success story that is now a North American leader in sports media, betting and esports. We operate one of the most popular sports media platforms in North America, as well as a successful and innovative mobile sportsbook operation that is licensed in our current jurisdictions.

The addition of our sportsbook operation has led to significant company growth, as we've increased our workforce by more than 50 percent and continue to actively hire at a rapid pace, with a focus on technology and engineering roles. Our overall business has accelerated. In September 2020, we graduated to the Toronto Stock Exchange and we recently executed a successful initial public offering in the U.S., debuting on the Nasdaq Global Select Market.

Collectively, we know how transformative this legislation will be for Canada, given the American example. Legalized sports betting has flourished in the U.S. since its repeal of the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act in 2018. It has created thousands of jobs, generated additional advertising revenue for television networks and sponsorship revenue for teams and leagues, and produced significant tax proceeds for states. All while providing a highly regulated system for fans to feel comfortable placing bets on the teams and sports they love.

Consumer Protection

As we stated in our appearance before the Justice Committee in the House of Commons, Bill C-218 will ensure the provinces implement necessary consumer safeguards to provide for a safe and responsible sports wagering environment. These have been established by provincial and territorial governments for other forms of wagering over decades, as a flourishing gaming sector has provided employment and boosted economic development across Canada. Single event sports betting will seamlessly integrate within these regulatory frameworks already in place.

We believe that each province and territory has already laid the foundations, both from the considerations of safety and regulatory frameworks, to advance and establish this legislation effectively.

Our Recommendation

We urge the Senators on this committee – and the Senate writ large – to pass Bill C-218 as quickly as possible. The pandemic's public safety measures are continuing to cause dramatic shortfalls in economic activity, and this new revenue stream will help nurture the green shoots of recovery, incenting job creation and regional economic development in many communities that will see direct and immediate benefits.

As it stands now, time is of the essence with the passing of this bill. Further deliberation will keep consumers exposed as they engage with unregulated outfits and in the hands of the black market gaming industry. There is compelling widespread industry and clear cross-party support to amend this outdated Federal law – and for good reason. It is sound and timely legislation that will benefit the Canadian people.

We thank the members of this committee for their consideration and thoughtful deliberation of this bill, and for this opportunity to provide our perspective and recommendation.