

**Testimony before the Senate Commerce Committee  
Amateur Sports Integrity Act (S. 2267)  
Congressman Jim Gibbons  
March 29, 2000**

Mr. Chairman:

I would like to thank you and the members of the Commerce Committee, for allowing me the opportunity to express my strong opposition to S. 2267, the Amateur Sports Integrity Act.

As the senior Congressman from the State of Nevada, the only state where sports wagering is legal, it is my pleasure to share my thoughts on this issue.

Like you, I firmly agree that maintaining the integrity of college athletics is an important goal.

However, there is absolutely no plausible evidence to suggest that the legal sports betting in Nevada is responsible for the illegal sports wagering occurring mostly on our nation's college campuses.

Legal wagering on sports in Nevada makes up only one to three percent of all sports bets nationwide. The other 97 to 99% occurs illegally under existing federal and state laws.

By banning legal college sports betting in Nevada, you will actually eliminate a tool used by law enforcement to detect unusual betting patterns leading to illegal activity, such as the point shaving scandal involving some Arizona State University basketball players in 1994.

Consequently, law enforcement experts, including a former FBI official who you will hear from later today, have stated that a ban as proposed in S. 2267 would not make a dent in illegal gambling.

So, what would be the effects of this misguided legislation?

First, S. 2267 would create an undue economic burden on thousands of Nevadans, whose livelihoods depend on the upstanding reputation of the casino-entertainment industry.

Second, S. 2267 would not, in any way, assist with the enforcement of our current laws limiting sports gambling. Even the NCAA Director of Agent and Gambling Activities has stated on national television that when it comes to law enforcement,

the NCAA has had a good relationship with the sports books in (Nevada).@

Later today, you will have the opportunity to learn more about Nevada's tightly regulated and well-respected gaming industry from the Nevada Gaming Commission Chairman, Brian Sandoval. A highly regarded regulator, Mr. Sandoval will detail the success Nevada has had in enforcing its gaming laws, which include taking bets only from individuals who are physically present and at least 21 years of age.

We need to support effective law enforcement measures which reduce the pervasiveness of illegal sports betting on and off of our college campuses.

And perhaps the NCAA should look in the mirror and reconsider the numerous A Final Four@ sweepstakes which the NCAA and its corporate sponsors promote during A March Madness.@

In closing, I would like to echo the concern recently expressed by *Washington Post* columnist George Will on this issue. In his March 12<sup>th</sup> column, he stated that this measure A sets some sort of indoor record for missing the point.@

It is my hope that this Committee will not miss the point, and that it will not go forward with this legislation.

Banning a legal and well-regulated sports betting industry is a misguided attempt to remedy the societal problem of illegal sports wagering on college campuses.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my thoughts on this important issue, and I welcome your questions or comments.