

**Testimony of the PGA TOUR on Sports Betting in New York and Senate Bill S17A
New York Senate Standing Committee on Racing, Gaming and Wagering**

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Andy Levinson, and I am the PGA TOUR's Senior Vice President of Tournament Administration. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today. I am here to discuss sports betting and Senate Bill S17A on behalf of the PGA TOUR, and voice our support for comprehensive sports betting legislation for the State of New York.

New York has deep connections to the game of golf and is a regular host to prestigious events. Last year, the U.S. Open was held at Shinnecock. This month, the Senior PGA Championship will be held at Oak Hill in Rochester and the PGA Championship will be held at Bethpage. And in 2020, the U.S. Open will return to Winged Foot in Mamaroneck. Golf is part of the state's sporting and cultural identity and is an economic engine for communities from Long Island to the Finger Lakes.

The sports betting opportunity for New York is vast. But so are the risks. The state should take the proper steps to protect the integrity of the sports that have long been a significant part of New York's economy and culture.

Today, I would like to address three sports betting topics – integrity, the use of official data, and mobile wagering. When it comes to these topics, our policy goals are consistent – eliminating the illegal betting market, generating revenue for the State and legal businesses, and protecting consumers.

First and foremost, the priority of the leagues is protecting the integrity of the games and contests. We have nothing if our fans don't believe our athletes are trying their best or they believe that the outcomes are contrived in any way. Sports betting puts that at risk. So we ask that legislation include several integrity-related protections. Legislation should require that operators notify sports leagues of problematic bets, cooperate with league investigations, and share real-time data so that we can work together to analyze all the data and information across all states and identify suspicious patterns.

As part of protecting integrity, legislation should also afford the PGA Tour and other sports governing bodies the ability to work with regulators to restrict bet types that pose a heightened risk of corruption. Certain types of bets are inherently riskier than others. We are concerned with permitting bets that are more vulnerable to manipulation: bets on lower or minor league contests, which have less overall public scrutiny and participants making far less in compensation; as well as bets on frequent, but easily controllable moments – such as whether a golfer will miss their next putt.

Second, we believe that legislation should require bookmakers to use official league data for live betting, meaning bets placed during a game, e.g., in baseball, the result of the next pitch. In sports betting, data decides the bets – it's the equivalent of the ball in roulette, or cards in blackjack. We believe that, for live betting – where integrity, timeliness, accuracy and consistency are paramount – the data should come from the official source, the leagues, and not from pirated sources like web scrapers and on-site operatives.

Official league data is the most safe, secure data available, and it has the highest standard of integrity. It comes from the source with the strongest interest in the integrity of the sport. It's also best for consumers. It gives consumers trust and confidence that their bets are being settled correctly. Today's sports betting customers, and the customers of the future, are increasingly interested in "in-play" betting, where customers wager on outcomes in real-time during games. With these "in-play bets," the need for accurate and uniform data becomes far more apparent and necessary.

For example, a golf bet could be taken on whether a drive is more or less than 300 yards. Imagine one sportsbook indicates the drive distance as 299 yards, while another marks it as 301 yards. Imagine the reaction of the losing customer. Dissatisfaction will spill over not only to the sportsbook but, potentially, to the PGA TOUR itself, creating disenchantment and suspicion of a "rigged" system. If New York sportsbooks are allowed to gather data from unauthorized sources, such as eyewitness accounts or pirated data, the risk of inaccurate, delayed, or inconsistent information could jeopardize the credibility of the entire system.

I would also like to briefly dispel a few myths about official data. We are not asking that a sportsbook buy the final results of games, like who won the Mets-Yankee game. We are only talking about live betting where the integrity and consumer risks are most pronounced. Betting operators do not have to offer live betting, but if they do, they should be required to use the only safe, accurate and consistent source. Also, we are not looking to take advantage of a monopoly power. We readily accept that official data would only be required if the league is offering it on commercially reasonable terms. We believe the use of official data is best for integrity, best for consumers and good, fair policy.

Last of all, I would like to address online betting or "mobile" betting. Currently, most illegal sports betting occurs online and via mobile apps. In New Jersey, already about 80% of betting is occurring online. If we truly want to shut down the illegal market, the regulated market will need a mobile option to encourage bettors to move from the illegal to the legal market. Without a mobile option, New York bettors who currently use their phones to place bets from the comfort of their couch – perhaps not even realizing it is illegal – will continue to do so and will not participate in the regulated legal market. Our goal is to convert these bettors to the legal market. At the same time, to help prevent addiction and underage betting, we support strong consumer protections in legislation, including age verification requirements, self-exclusion programs and responsible advertising requirements.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify here today. We look forward to working with the legislature to make sports betting in New York work for the state, sports fans, and all stakeholders. I am happy to answer any questions.