The Phyllis Schlafly Report

Sports Gambling Addiction Invades Super Sunday

By John and Andy Schlafly

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Sports gambling takes center stage with the Super Bowl being televised from Las Vegas on Sunday. Apps available on everyone's phones makes betting during this game more accessible and convenient than ever before.

A small initial bet then goes into an internet surveillance system that exploits this information to target the bettor with a barrage of ads enticing him to gamble further. This is a gold mine for the online gambling companies, led by FanDuels and DraftKings, both of which are airing expensive Super Bowl ads this year as is BetMGM.

Calls to gambling addiction hotlines have already spiked in the 38 states where sports betting has been legalized. When Ohio authorized sports gambling last year, calls to the state's gamblers' hotline tripled in the very first month.

The *New York Times* recently quoted the former Senator Bill Bradley (D-NJ), who sponsored a federal ban on sports gambling as a retired professional basketball star. Some pretend that sports gambling "can now be controlled," he said, "and I just don't think it will be controlled. I think it will pervade the culture."

The U.S. Supreme Court regrettably struck down Bradley's federal ban on sports gambling in *Murphy v. NCAA* (2018), and all but 12 states have since legalized betting on these games. Gambling addiction has risen to an all-time high.

An employee of one NFL team, the Jacksonville Jaguars, stole $22 million from the team in order to lose virtually all of it on sports gambling. The team is attempting to recover that stolen money from the online gambling companies, but they refuse.

Last week a federal district court in New Jersey dismissed a lawsuit by another victim of gambling, declaring that casinos have no legal duty to stop taking bets by a compulsive gambler. New Jersey's Consumer Fraud Act is supposed to shield against unconscionable acts by companies, yet gamblers as consumers are not protected as other consumers are.

More than half of college and even high school students gamble now, and one out every 5 college students admits to spending some of his student loans or financial aid on sports

betting according to a survey by Intelligent.com. Many college athletic departments even partner with sportsbooks to promote more gambling to students at the college.

The highest percentage of victims are young men and their families. But wait, this year bookies are taking bets concerning Taylor Swift at the Super Bowl, on what she will wear and whether Travis Kelce will propose to her, and 20% of women aged 18 to 49 are online sports gamblers.

Known as “prop bets,” these are wagers on issues unrelated to the game, such as what shade of lipstick Taylor Swift will be wearing. Offshore gambling sites are processing bets on this and as many as 89 aspects of Swift and the Super Bowl, for all the Swifties who will be tuning in, although prop bets are illegal in some states.

Until recently, the NFL strictly kept gambling out of football, but now it has partnered with online gambling companies to tap into the profits and boost television ratings. On Monday NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell said that the NFL seeks to ensure “the action on the field is genuine and without any outside influence,” but three dozen players and league officials have already been found in violation of the rules.

Holding the Super Bowl in Las Vegas this year injects more gambling into the sport. While players are told not to place any bets while there, it is impossible not to walk past a “one-armed bandit,” the ubiquitous slot machine, in that city.

Fourteen out of 15 experienced oddsmakers told the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* that they felt Las Vegas would never host the Super Bowl. This is like holding a fireworks competition in a dry, flammable forest despite warnings about the high risk of fire.

Studies show that 16% of gambling addicts attempt suicide, more than 20 times the rate in the general population and the highest of any addiction. Today young adults are compulsively betting through apps on their phones, including while in the shower, while driving, and in the middle of the night.

Microbetting entices sports fans to bet live on the next play, but they are competing against predictive AI tools that know the odds far better than a fan can. Scientific evidence shows that young adults do not have a fully developed ability to assess risk-benefit until age 25.

A pagan holiday was long celebrated on December 25 until Christianity displaced that with Christmas. As gambling promoters take over Super Sunday and some call for a national

holiday the following Monday, it is time to rein this in by urging everyone to delete their gambling apps on their phones instead.

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