The Phyllis Schlafly Report

Virginia Liberals Embrace Gambling and Gun Control

By John and Andy Schlafly

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Boosted by pro-gun-control millions in donations by Mike Bloomberg in the last election, newly empowered liberals in Virginia extended their legislative session this past weekend. They enacted sweeping gun control and also broad expansions of gambling, which is backwards from what would help enhance prosperity and freedom.

It will soon be legal in Virginia to bet on football games and other sporting events, except for contests involving Virginia college teams. This unleashes a new, costly addiction for the millions of sports fans in the state who can soon waste their family savings in addition to their precious time.

A misguided ruling by the Supreme Court in 2018 opened the floodgates to the legalization of sports gambling by states, but many states have wisely declined the invitation. Studies have shown that the poor are most hurt by legalized gambling, and they are the least able to afford it.

A total of 15 states currently allow some form of sports gambling, and five other states plus the District of Columbia have passed laws to legalize it. There appears to be a race to the bottom as states compete with each other in facilitating the massive waste of time and money by their residents which such gambling entails.

The Supreme Court ruling in *Murphy v. NCAA* ignored the obvious vices of legalized sports gambling, which range from corrupting the games to causing people to lose their savings. While justice is supposed to be blind, it should not be blind to the immense harm caused by decisions like this one.

The Court observed that "gambling was largely banned throughout the country" by the end of the 19th century, but then omitted the reasons why. Its corruption of politics was one reason, and gambling will surely corrupt sports too.

For this reason the NCAA, which governs college sports, has long opposed gambling on its games. "The NCAA opposes all forms of legal and illegal sports wagering, which has the potential to undermine the integrity of sports contests and jeopardizes the student-athletes and the intercollegiate athletics community."

Families, already fed up with how Thanksgiving Day and Christmas have become rituals of senseless watching of football games, can expect financial losses now too. In California,

Indian tribes are gathering signatures on petitions to put sports gambling at tribal casinos throughout the state on its ballot in November.

Professional sports leagues used to be strongly opposed to allowing gambling on their games, but greed has led them to search for more sources of revenue, and gambling has that allure. People who bet on games are more likely to watch them, and that may help stem the general decline in television ratings.

The scandal of the Houston Astros' stealing signs to help them win the World Series a few years back should be sobering enough. Yet Major League Baseball stands now with the NFL and NBA in wanting people gambling on their games.

The Democrat-controlled Virginia legislature also authorized casinos for nearly a half-dozen cities in Virginia, including its state capital of Richmond, provided their residents approve in local referenda. With gambling interests vastly outspending the opposition, it will be difficult for pro-family groups to keep the casinos out of these Virginia towns.

No one keeps statistics about how many young men drop out of school or quit their jobs due to a gambling addiction. But enough of them apparently are for a frequent question to a professional poker player to be something like "I want to quit my job (or school) to become a pro poker player, and I seek advice how."

Elections do have consequences, and harmful ones to the people of Virginia. The historic city of Richmond, also the seat of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, will be invaded by slot machines and roulette wheels thanks to the Democrats who swept in last November.

Meanwhile, the Democrats pushed through irrational gun control, placing a limit of one handgun purchase per 30 days even by law-abiding citizens. In addition, background checks are extended to include all gun sales, except between family members.

Earlier the same legislature passed a so-called red-flag law to authorize a judge or magistrate to seize anyone's guns based on allegations about instability of the owner. Second Amendment rights are secure in Virginia now only to the extent the judicial system allows it for an individual.

More than 100 towns in Virginia have responded to the liberal push for gun control there by announcing that they will not comply with the unconstitutional provisions. There has even been talk of rural areas breaking away from the Deep State-controlled northern Virginia, where many of the residents either work for the federal government or make big money lobbying it.

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