

Durbin, Britt Urge CDC To Study Rise Of Youth Sports Betting

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Ranking Member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and U.S. Senator Katie Britt (R-AL), a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, sent a bipartisan letter to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) urging the agency to further study the alarming rise in sports gambling among America’s youth and the potential adverse effects on teens and young adults.

“We write to urge the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to study how America’s youth are being impacted by the rapid rise of sports gambling across America,” wrote the Senators.

The Senators continued their letter, **“Since the legalization of sports gambling in the United States, there has been limited research examining the extent to which minors are accessing sports betting platforms – whether through illegal access of legitimate platforms or through illegitimate offshore operations. However, the few existing studies are deeply troubling.”**

The Senators go on to request that the CDC include questions about children’s gambling activity, particularly sports betting, as the agency develops its Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), which is a survey that monitors a broad range of health-related behaviors among students as it relates to their mental health and substance use.

“As you know, the CDC’s Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) is conducted every two years to measure the frequency and scope of priority health-risk behaviors in American children...We ask that the CDC develop and incorporate questions about gambling by children, and in particular sports gambling, to give policymakers and families a better understanding of how, and to what extent, sports gambling is harming our children,” the Senators wrote.

The Senators concluded their letter by urging the CDC to provide any data or research the agency collects about children’s gambling activity to better understand the impact.

“We ask that you provide Congress with what questions, if any, the CDC plans to introduce in the YRBSS related to gambling, and specifically sports gambling, to help us better understand the scope of this problem, as well as an estimate of the resources needed to add such topics to the YRBSS. Further, please provide Congress with any research or information you may find about the harmful impact of sports gambling on American children, and what steps the CDC is or may be taking to address this rising problem,” the Senators concluded their letter.

U.S. Senators Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), and Brian Schatz (D-HI) joined Senators Britt and Durbin in sending the letter.

Full text of the letter can be found [here](#).

In December 2024, Durbin chaired a Senate Judiciary Committee [hearing](#) entitled “America’s High-Stakes Bet on Legalized Sports Gambling,” which examined the growth of sports betting since the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Murphy v. NCAA* struck down the *Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act* in 2018. During the hearing, Durbin [spoke](#) with NCAA President Charlie Barker about curbing sports gambling, including “prop bets,” which have led to increased athlete harassment.

An estimated 2.5 million U.S. adults meet the criteria for a severe gambling problem, and the risk of problem gambling has risen by 30 percent since 2018. Globally, 17.9 percent of youth under 18 have gambled in the past 12 months while North America has the highest estimated prevalence of adolescent gambling at 33.7 percent. Additionally, more than two thirds of adult gamblers have reported that exposure to gambling during adolescence was a key contributing factor to their current gambling.

