COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION & WORKFORCE
CHAIRMAN TIM WALBERG

COMMITTEE STATEMENT

Opening Statement of Rep. Michael Baumgartner (R-WA)
Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development Hearing
"The Rise of Sports Gambling on College Campuses"
November 11, 2026

(As prepared for delivery)

Since a landmark Supreme Court decision paved the way in 2018, many states have rushed to legalize sports betting. What was once an industry on the margins—confined to Las Vegas or Atlantic City—is now legal in 39 states. Online sportsbooks and prediction market apps have placed miniature casinos in the palms of our hands, making placing a bet as easy as checking the weather.

The sports betting industry has exploded as a result. Prior to the Supreme Court's decision, Americans wagered just under $5 billion a year through regulated sportsbooks. Last year, it was $167 billion, more than a 3,000 percent increase in less than a decade. More than one in four Americans now have an active account with an online sportsbook.

Nowhere has the surge of online betting been more pronounced than college campuses. Young people, and young men in particular, gamble at outsized rates. According to an NCAA survey, 67 percent of students living on campus had bet on sports, and 16 percent had shown problem gambling behaviors such as "chasing losses" or spending more money on bets than they planned. Six percent of students reported they

had lost more than $500 in a single day. Those figures are from 2023 and are likely even higher today.

Gambling poses serious risks for everyone, but especially college students. They exhibit problematic gambling behavior at more than twice the rate of the general population. And the earlier young people start gambling, the greater the odds they will develop a gambling disorder later in life, even years or decades later.

Academic and financial consequences for America's college students are already here. An undergraduate survey released last month found that 31 percent of male students and 25 percent of female students know someone who had experienced "financial distress or academic fallout from online wagering losses." Students who had gambled online were 10 percent more likely to report having struggled to pay for basic expenses such as medication, transportation, and housing than students who had never gambled. Another survey alarmingly found that more than one in five students had even used financial aid to place bets.

Even as sports betting has become a growing problem on campuses, most colleges are not treating it as such. Dr. James Borchers, chief medical officer for the Big Ten Conference, has said gambling has risen to the top of the list of concerns for schools, alongside or even above alcohol. Yet almost half of male undergraduates say their college is "underresponding" to the harms of gambling at their schools. A recent survey of college administrators found that only 3 percent said their institution had updated its financial literacy or orientation materials to provide resources and education around gambling

Many colleges already have systems in place to educate students about alcohol and substance use. The same is not yet true for gambling. Right now, the only population on campus required to receive gambling education is student-athletes, because the NCAA requires it. The general student body is largely left without the same information and resources.

Fortunately, some campuses are leading the way and beginning to address this problem. Today, we'll hear from our expert witnesses about the research on gambling among college students and innovative ways schools are beginning to educate students on the risks of gambling.