



Public Question No. 1

November 2, 2021 General Election Ballot

Voters Decide YES or NO

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO PERMIT WAGERING ON ALL COLLEGE SPORT OR ATHLETIC EVENTS

BALLOT QUESTION:

Do you approve amending the Constitution to permit wagering through casinos and current or former horse racetracks on all college sport or athletic events? Currently, wagering is prohibited on college sport or athletic events that take place in New Jersey. Wagering is also prohibited on an event in which a team from a New Jersey college participates.

INTERPRETIVE STATEMENT (as appearing on the ballot):

Currently, the State Constitution prohibits wagering on college sport or athletic events taking place in New Jersey. It also prohibits wagering on an event in which a New Jersey college team participates. This amendment would allow the Legislature to pass laws permitting wagering on any college sport or athletic event. It would permit wagering even if a New Jersey college team participates in the competition. Such wagering would be permitted only through casinos and current or former horse racetracks.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION (prepared by the League of Women Voters of New Jersey):

Voters vote “yes” or “no” on ballot questions. If approved, this question would amend the New Jersey State Constitution to allow the Legislature to permit betting on collegiate contests held within New Jersey, or involving New Jersey teams.

In 2011 voters amended the state constitution to allow betting on professional and college sports, except those college sports being played in the state and those involving New Jersey college teams. Because of a federal prohibition, the state couldn’t actually allow betting to take place until 2018, after the U.S. Supreme Court invalidated the federal law preventing wagers. Sports betting in New Jersey is allowed in casinos, at racetracks and online.

Between June 2018 and July 2021, New Jersey collected \$152.6 million in taxes from sports betting, averaging approximately \$4 million per month.¹ These revenues are disbursed to the General Fund, the Casino Revenue Fund (which funds programs for seniors and persons with

¹ <https://www.sportsbettingdime.com/new-jersey/sports-betting-revenue/>

disabilities), the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (which supports economic development projects in Atlantic City) as well as to local governments in areas where racetracks are located.

Reasons a voter might vote “Yes”:

- This amendment equalizes the opportunities for betting on college sports held in New Jersey and played by NJ teams versus college games played elsewhere or by other teams.
- The Amendment would result in an increase in sports betting, increasing tax revenues.
- Major college sporting events are scheduled to be held in New Jersey, including the 2025 NCAA Men’s Basketball East Regional finals. This amendment would allow the state to take advantage of gambling on those events and derive tax revenue, instead of losing out on that revenue to other states.
- The recent U.S. Supreme Court decision allowing NCAA athletes to receive compensation mitigates concerns that student athletes would be especially vulnerable to match fixing due to their lack of compensation.
- Allowing more legal opportunities for sports gambling would be expected to displace illegal, unregulated gambling.

Reasons a voter might vote “No”:

- Allowing betting on New Jersey collegiate competitions could threaten the integrity of college athletics, as New Jersey student athletes might be more susceptible to corruption and match fixing.
- Student athlete well-being could be negatively impacted, as gambling on collegiate games might result in an atmosphere of increased social pressure from peers and via social media.
- The Amendment could result in an increase in problematic gambling. Per the National Council on Problem Gambling March 2021 Report, “Younger players (under age 35) appear to be at higher risk for gambling problems.”²
- The relatively marginal increases in tax revenue expected might not justify the risks entailed by the change.
- Some voters oppose sports betting and its expansion.

² <https://www.ncpgambling.org/ncpg-releases-comprehensive-study-of-public-attitudes-about-gambling/>