

Update on Sports Wagering in Louisiana



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We write with an update on the status of sports wagering in Louisiana. In [our May 2019 article](#) titled “Sports Wagering in Louisiana Might Be on the Horizon,” we provided an overview of [Senate Bill 153](#), sponsored by Senator Danny Martiny (R-Metairie), and its efforts to legalize sports wagering in Louisiana. As of May 22, the date on which our prior article was published, the Senate had passed Senate Bill 153 by a 24-15 vote, and the bill was awaiting consideration in the House of Representatives after being reported favorably out of the House Committee on the Administration of Criminal Justice. At the time, it appeared that sports wagering might soon be made legal in Louisiana, but things quickly changed as the bill progressed in the House.

On May 29, Senate Bill 153 was referred to the House Appropriations Committee, which ultimately proved fatal to the bill’s success. In considering Senate Bill 153, the House Appropriations Committee tacked on several amendments that would have greatly expanded the availability of sports wagering in Louisiana beyond what was initially contemplated. As originally drafted, Senate Bill 153 proposed to legalize sports wagering only at licensed riverboat casinos, live horse racing facilities, and the land-based casino in New Orleans. The amendments proposed by the House Appropriations Committee, however, would have allowed sports wagering to also be offered at the approximately 2,800 licensed video poker establishments in Louisiana. The amendments thus quickly drew the ire of the casino industry in

Louisiana, which ultimately withdrew its support of the amended bill. With support for Senate Bill 153 dwindling, the House Appropriations Committee involuntarily deferred the bill, which was never considered by the full House.

Efforts to legalize sports wagering during the 2019 Regular Session did not end with Senate Bill 153. Indeed, proponents of sports wagering sought to tack some of Senate Bill 153's key provisions on to other legislation prior to the end of the 2019 Regular Session, but those efforts likewise failed. For example, aspects of Senate Bill 153 found their way into [House Bill 459](#), which was intended to establish a regulatory framework for fantasy sports wagering after its legalization during the 2018 Regular Session. But the sports wagering amendments to House Bill 459 were ultimately rejected by the full House of Representatives. Similarly, the House rejected [House Bill 587](#), the companion bill to Senate Bill 153 aimed at establishing a regulatory framework for sports wagering. In sum, despite the belief of many that 2019 would be the year that Louisiana legalized sports wagering, the 2019 Regular Session concluded without the passage of any legislation to legalize sports wagering in the state. Additionally, without a regulatory framework, daily fantasy sports wagering, although legalized in 2018, cannot move forward in Louisiana.

It is possible that sports wagering may not be considered by the Louisiana Legislature again until the 2021 Regular Session. This is because the legislature is typically allowed to approve tax-related bills only in odd-numbered years, and such legislation would be required before sports wagering can be offered. The only way the Legislature could consider sports wagering again prior to the 2021 Regular Session would be via the convening of a Special Session, which presently appears unlikely to occur.

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