



Florida Senator wants to legalize online sports betting

This isn't the first time a bill has been introduced calling for the legalization of sports bets.

Friday, December 20th 2019, 8:28 PM EST
by Rachel Anderson

Sports betting is an estimated multi-billion dollar illegal industry in the United States.

Florida Senator, Jeff Brandes, wants to change that here in the Sunshine State by legalizing mobile sports bets on apps or websites, similar to that of fantasy betting.

This isn't the first time a bill has been introduced calling for the legalization of sports bets. Follow this story to get email or text alerts from ABC7 when there is a future article following this storyline.

Last year, a bill failed after pushback from the Seminole Tribe, who runs all state casinos. The question is: Is sports betting considered casino gambling?

Some said this year's bill is destined to fail, too.

Fort Myers attorney Kevin Jursinski said in addition to the Seminole Tribe, Disney may fight against it.

Plus, a law passed in 2018 requires gaming expansion to be voted on at the local level.

One thing the bill does offer is regulation.

"Should it be done? Absolutely. Does it make sense? Of course. Is it happening? Yes. Is the state getting any money on it now? No. Is it a crime? Yeah. Can we make it legal? Yeah! Why shouldn't we? But I don't think from what I've read it's gonna happen," said Jursinski.

On the opposing end, a bill filed in the House just this week calls for more gambling restrictions.

In addition to keeping sports betting illegal, Representative Will Robinson wants all Florida Lottery ads and tickets to include a warning: Play Responsibly.

Brenda Iliff, Executive Director of Hazelden Betty Ford Florida, said these warnings could be beneficial.

"Anything that affects our dopamine or some of our other chemicals in our brain can be highly addictive for some people... So, we want to advocate for responsible gaming, but there are people that are gonna cross the line and their lives will be devastated."