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June 6, 2019

### **Memorandum of Opposition**

A.6113B (Pretlow) / S.17B (Addabbo)

The Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (CICU) opposes A.6113B/S.17B, a bill which would remove the prohibition on fantasy wagering on collegiate sporting events. CICU represents more than 100 private, not-for-profit colleges and universities in New York State who educate almost 500,000 students annually.

This legislation would allow gambling on college sport or athletic events through online fantasy sports platforms. When sport betting was first authorized in New York State, the Legislature wisely chose to insulate New York's student athletes from the pressures that can accompany gambling by banning fantasy sports betting for all college athletic events and prohibiting casino-based gambling on any college sporting event in New York State or any game by a New York State college regardless of the venue. The vast majority of student athletes aren't even eligible to place wagers under New York law, yet the instant proposal would make them the subject of bets.

Interactive fantasy wagering focuses on specific players rather than a team, leading to increased focus on individual student athletes. Individual athletes would be faced with pressure not just to perform at their best, but to fulfill the expectations of adult gamblers who had placed bets on their performance. This has the potential to create a toxic environment and expose student athletes to moneyed interests looking to leverage their performance for cash. Athletes will be more susceptible to these pressures because unlike bets placed by out of state gamblers, pressure can emanate closer to home-- in the dorms, the local pizza shops and even the classroom. We have an obligation to our student athletes to protect them, to the maximum extent possible, from the dangerous distractions that being the subject of a bet can create. Such distractions can have life altering consequences.

CICU urges the Legislature to maintain the protections for student athletes that are contained in current law.