

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025

The Honorable Adam Silver  
Commissioner  
National Basketball Association  
645 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10022

Dear Commissioner Silver:

You said you were “*deeply disturbed*” by the indictments of a National Basketball Association (NBA) head coach, an active player, and those to organized crime.<sup>1</sup> What should disturb you more is that this corruption is the foreseeable consequence of the NBA’s decision to entangle the sport with a rapidly expanding, barely regulated gambling marketplace.

You told the public that “*nothing is more important than the integrity of the competition.*” That claim rings hollow when the league sold its credibility to gambling operators, pushed betting content into broadcasts, normalized wagering for teenagers, glorified it in advertising, and then feigned surprise when criminal conduct erupted inside your own league.

And the damage here is not confined to the sanctity of competition. The NBA’s actions have fueled a public health crisis. We now have:

- A dramatic surge in sports betting and gambling addiction help-seeking<sup>2</sup>
- Increasing bankruptcy, family collapse, and suicide linked to gambling losses<sup>3</sup>
- Constant, high-pressure marketing aimed at vulnerable populations
- A rapidly widening pipeline of new gamblers driven by league-authorized promotion

The league partnered with an industry that profits from addiction and loss, then placed that product in the pocket of every fan in America. To pretend the only stake is “*integrity of the game*” ignores the human wreckage accumulating off the court.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/nba-commissioner-says-s-deeply-disturbed-gambling-case-rcna239717>

<sup>2</sup> <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/39960737/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/gambling-disorder/what-is-gambling-disorder>

You also asserted that the league could not act because only federal prosecutors have subpoena power. That is not a defense. It is evidence that voluntary self-policing has failed, and the status quo is fundamentally broken.

That is precisely why we need federal regulation, as [you yourself called for more than a decade ago in your New York Times op-ed](#). My SAFE Bet Act would impose minimum federal standards including marketing limits, data and privacy protections, public health safeguards, and transparency measures that no league has been willing to adopt on its own. While reasonable people can debate the specifics of federal standards on the sports betting industry, it is abundantly clear that the exclusively state-based regulatory approach is fundamentally flawed and will continue to jeopardize the integrity of our sports and the public health of our citizens.

The choice before you is now explicit. Either engage directly with Congress to establish mandatory federal guardrails that restore integrity and protect the public or stand in opposition and accept responsibility when the next scandal breaks and more families and lives are destroyed.

Sincerely,



PAUL D. TONKO  
Member of Congress