



# **Bill C-218: An Act to amend the Criminal Code**

Submission to Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights

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To the Members of this Committee:

theScore is pleased to have this opportunity to submit our brief for the study of Bill C-218, affirming our full support for the legalization of single event sports betting in Canada.

This legislation will enable the provinces to establish a competitive market for sports betting in a safe and regulated manner - establishing a vital new revenue stream, creating jobs, expanding responsible gaming measures, and combating the illegal market that is currently thriving both here in Canada and globally.

We took advantage of the opportunity in the United States to serve our many users through the safe and regulated sports betting frameworks established by individual states. In September 2019 we debuted theScore Bet, making history by becoming the first media company to create and operate a mobile sportsbook in the U.S. theScore Bet is now live in four states with a growing footprint and user base. Our early entry into regulated sports betting has positioned us at the forefront of this robust industry, which has been an economic catalyst and provides easily accessible, safe entertainment for millions of people.

The addition of our sportsbook operation has led to significant company growth. We've increased our work force by approximately 50% and plan to hire more than 125 employees over the next 12 months, with a focus on technology and engineering roles. Our overall business has accelerated. In September, we graduated to the Toronto Stock Exchange and we recently executed a successful initial public offering in the U.S., debuting on the Nasdaq Global Select Market.

Canada is now poised to usher in this vibrant industry that has the potential to be transformative for our economy. Legalized sports betting has flourished in the U.S. since its repeal of the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act in 2018. It has created thousands of jobs, generated additional advertising revenue for television networks and sponsorship revenue for teams and leagues, and produced significant tax proceeds for states.

All while providing a highly regulated system for fans to feel comfortable placing bets on the teams and sports they love. It is clear that a similar thoughtful and modernized legalized wagering framework would benefit all Canadians.

## **Consumer Protections**

The essential component of the public policy conversation around this bill is underscored by quoting the bill's name in full: the Safe and Regulated Sports Betting Act. Unregulated and illegal sports gambling is rampant across our country and offers no consumer protections or tax revenues for the provinces. Sports wagering needs to be monitored and regulated with comprehensive oversight to protect consumers.

Bill C-218 will allow the provinces to implement necessary consumer safeguards to provide for a safe and responsible sports wagering environment. These have been established by provincial and territorial governments for other forms of wagering over decades, as a flourishing gaming sector has provided employment and boosted economic development across Canada. Single event sports betting will seamlessly integrate within these regulatory frameworks already in place.

We believe that each province and territory has already laid the foundation, both from the considerations of safety and regulatory frameworks, to advance and establish this legislation effectively.

## **Our Recommendation**

We urge the House of Commons and the Senate to pass Bill C-218 as quickly as possible. In connection with the legalization of single event sports wagering, we acknowledge the need for the horse racing industry to be safeguarded. We note that Bill C-13, the government version of this legislation, contained language to properly address this issue and we support an amendment to Bill C-218 that will replicate the approach of Bill C-13 to ensure that the interests of the horse racing industry are protected.

Time is of the essence with the passing of this bill. The pandemic's public safety measures have precipitated dramatic shortfalls in economic activity, and these gambling revenues represent a significant boost to revive a moribund recovery, incenting job creation and regional economic development in many communities that will see direct and immediate benefits.

Until this bill is passed, consumers will continue to remain exposed as they engage with unregulated outfits. There is now widespread industry and clear cross-party support to amend this outdated Federal law, and it is time to seize the opportunity.

We thank the Government of Canada for their consideration and thoughtful deliberation of this bill, and for this opportunity to provide our perspective and recommendation.