

U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell
Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee
Hearing Titled “No Sure Bets: Protecting Sports Integrity in America”
May 20, 2026

Sen. Cantwell Q&A

[\[VIDEO\]](#)

Sen. Cantwell: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to Senator Blackburn and Hickenlooper for doing this subcommittee [hearing]. And I think that last conversation is illuminating, and I'd like to follow up on it, but I'd like to remind everybody [that] we had a financial collapse of our economy because we didn't do the job of regulating derivatives.

I remember somebody on the Senate floor actually saying, we can't regulate them. We don't know what they are. It had a conservative journalist who basically said, the lack of clarity is fraud. If you can't understand it, then yes, there is something behind the situation.

I definitely want to say that fans must have confidence that games are being played fairly and honestly, so I agree with the Chairman on that. That's what makes competition great, and that is why Senator Cruz and I are conducting bipartisan inquiry into how the leagues, the sports books, and the stakeholders are protecting the integrity of sports and teams.

But I believe that this integrity crisis goes beyond how we monitor players and betting activities. We must also ask, why would a professional athlete making millions of dollars risk losing everything to place a bet?

In many cases, it's the same answer: online betting platforms can be highly addictive. So, I'm glad our witness, Dr. Levant, is talking about that today. Whether you're a star athlete or a struggling college student, once they're hooked, [online sports betting platforms are] designed to keep them coming back for more.

So, the conversation that we just had: Mr. Miller, I'm just trying to understand, because our former colleague here, Congressman McHenry, talked a little bit about the history, but in 2010 Congress amended the Commodity Exchange Act in the wake of that financial crisis I just said.

Under Section Five, Congress authorized the CFTC to prohibit prediction markets from offering contracts that involved gaming and gaming activities, and in 2011 they issued Rule 40.11, which banned prediction markets from offering contracts involving gaming activities.

In doing so, they stated the rule was consistent with our congressional intent, and the CFTC prohibited sports betting contracts for more than 15 years under this rule, but all of a sudden, starting in 2025 prediction markets began offering sports gambling contracts.

So, my state wants to know why the Indian gaming [operations] – who basically have lived by the rules in their state and lived by the rules of a regulated entity – are now all of a sudden competing with somebody that is not a regulated entity that's basically offering the same product.

In 2025, the Indian gaming industry generated more than 680,000 jobs for rural Americans and it has served as an economic livelihood. If the prediction markets are allowed to keep operating unchecked, does this pose an existential threat to both tribal sovereignty and to Indian country, and what can Congress do to better protect Indian gaming?

Bill Miller: Well, thank you, Ranking Member. Clearly we share the same view. As someone who was around during Dodd-Frank, and recognizing that this was a response to a financial crisis that was created by lax regulation, or in fact no regulation, it's really hard to believe that anybody could pull from that the idea that we could create a national sports book run through the CFTC.

It's hard to even imagine that anybody could make the argument, but here's where we're here today. In fact, there were federal statutes on the books when Dodd-Frank was amended and created: IGRA, which established the framework for Indian gaming, PASPA, which actually was, you know, was struck down in 2018, and the WIRE Act.

All federal statutes that should have been at least looked at and modified, if the CEA was going to be amended to create the federal Department of Gambling. Of course it was not. It was never intended to be that.

And then finally, when in 2018 when the Supreme Court actually debated *Murphy v. NCAA*, even the Supreme Court didn't understand and or recognize that there was a back door opportunity for the sports betting industry through prediction markets back in 2018.

And so, yes, there's real harm here. Chairman Bean, who is one of your constituents who runs the Indian Gaming Association, he and I are very aligned on this. Indian country is scared. They believe that gaming has been a transformational economic opportunity for some of the people that have been treated worse than almost anybody else in this country's history.

Gaming has created economic vitality and an opportunity for them, and that opportunity is very much at risk because of prediction markets.

Sen. Cantwell: Well, I just looked it up because I wanted to make sure, and I didn't get that quote quite right before. It was PJ O'Rourke, and he said "complexity is fraud." His point was if it's so complex and you can't understand it, and complexity is the fraud. So that's where we are today.

No one can answer the question, why [do] we have two competing businesses here? Well, we have Indian Gaming, that is all for sports betting, and then another entity that's offering sports betting, but it's not regulated in the same way. So, I think we got to get answers to that.

[Dr.] Levant, I know you've probably been asked this by our colleagues already, but what do we do about this larger issue? There was recent data from [the] Washington Healthy [Youth] Survey shows troubling trends with youth and gambling. These include material increases in the number of 10th graders who are saying they've engaged in gaming across [the] state.

How does that online betting – I mean, are people just being targeted at this young age?

Dr. Harry Levant: People are being targeted relentlessly, and this discussion of prediction markets has done something that others would have predicted 'small p' impossible: that's Mr. Miller and I agreeing on an issue.

The prediction markets take this and [are] not only infringing upon sovereign rights [and] tribal gaming, but 18 year olds, and they're being told it's investment. I've had six clients in my recovery group who have relapsed because they were told this is an investment. I'm not gambling, I'm making an investment, it's just so fundamentally wrong.

Where I disagree with Mr. Miller is there's a huge need for federal oversight because of what's happening with children and young adults and families with online sports gambling, but it's significantly worse now with prediction markets because they're acting under color of federal law targeting people as young as 18.

[Prediction markets] don't have to comply with things like self-exclusion. They're just doing whatever they want to do, and the harm is growing exponentially.

Sen. Cantwell: Well, I thank the Chair. I've gone over my time, but I'm asking him about the impact on youth, and the Chairwoman and I have worked diligently on a lot of legislation to protect young people online, so we'll add this to the list. So, thank you so much. Thank you, Madam Chair.