



## Superbowl 51: Illegal Betting & Gambling Problems

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Wednesday, February 1, 2017, Washington, DC One concern about the massive amount of illegal betting on Superbowl 51—estimated at \$4.5 billion by the American Gaming Association—is the relationship between illegal gambling and gambling problems. Many studies have found that people who gamble illegally are more likely to have gambling problems. In addition, gamblers who bet with illegal bookmakers have no consumer protection or legal recourse if the bookie cheat or simply pockets their money. Problem gamblers desperate to bet and unable to control their gambling are particularly susceptible to abuse. “Bookies prey on problem gamblers by extending credit and threatening violence to collect debt. Illegal gambling operations are often associated with loansharking, organized crime and other criminal activities” notes NCPG Executive Director Keith Whyte. “Betting with a bookie can lead problem gamblers into a downward spiral of addiction, bankruptcy and crime.”

The good news is that there is hope and help. The majority of problem gamblers who complete a course of treatment are able to stop gambling and improve their financial, work and family lives. Reaching out for help is an important first step to take.

If you or someone you know has a problem with gambling call or text the National Problem Gambling Helpline Network at 800.522.4700 or chat at [www.ncpgambling.org/chat](http://www.ncpgambling.org/chat). The Network is a toll free and confidential single point of access for problem gambling help anywhere in the U.S. The Helpline Network is the national “911” safety net for problem gamblers and their loved ones and received 323,000 calls last year and more than 4 million since 2000.

NCPG’s mission is to lead state and national stakeholders in the development of comprehensive policy and programs for all those affected by problem gambling. Our purpose is to serve as the national advocate for programs and services to assist problem gamblers and their families in order to improve health and wellness by reducing the personal, social and economic costs of problem gambling. NCPG is neither for nor against legalized gambling.

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