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MGCB Joins International Regulators to Mark Illegal Gambling Awareness Week, Urges Michigan Residents to 'Play It Safe. Bet Legal.'

DETROIT, Nov. 10, 2026 — The Michigan Gaming Control Board (MGCB) is joining gaming regulators around the world in recognizing Illegal Gambling Awareness Week, Nov. 9–13, the first internationally coordinated effort to raise consumer awareness of the risks of unlicensed online gambling, organized by the International Association of Gaming Regulators (IAGR). The campaign asks consumers to take one simple step: before you bet, check whether the site is licensed where you are playing. To help, IAGR is launching a free online tool, CheckBeforeYouPlay.org.

In Michigan, the MGCB's message is just as simple: Play it safe. Bet legal. The agency has already been sharing that message across the state and will continue it through radio public service announcements airing throughout November, beyond the international week, reminding residents to make sure an online casino or sportsbook is licensed in Michigan before they place a bet.

"Illegal gambling operators want you to believe they're just another option. They're not," said **Henry Williams, executive director of the MGCB**. "When you play with an unlicensed operator, there's no one verifying your age or identity, no one making sure your winnings get paid, and no regulator you can turn to when something goes wrong. Michigan built a legal market with real consumer protections, and we want every resident to know how to find it."

Michigan's licensed online casinos and sportsbooks must meet strict requirements enforced by the MGCB, including verifying players are 21 or older, protecting player funds and personal information using secure payment methods, offering responsible gaming tools such as deposit and time limits, honoring the state's Responsible Gaming Database, and giving players a way to file complaints with the MGCB. Illegal operators, including offshore websites, unlicensed sweepstakes casinos, and prediction markets offering sports contracts without a Michigan license, are not subject to any of these rules.

The MGCB actively pursues illegal operators and has sent hundreds of cease-and-desist letters to unlicensed online gambling operators. The agency also works closely with the Michigan Department of

Attorney General, which in September secured a preliminary injunction barring Kalshi from offering sports event contracts to people in Michigan. In October, Coinbase agreed to stop offering sports-related event contracts, including those traded on Kalshi to Michigan customers, following a similar agreement with Robinhood. Most recently, on Oct. 28, Polymarket US agreed to stop offering new sports-related event contracts in Michigan and to close any open contracts held by Michigan residents by Nov. 25, under an agreement approved by a federal court. None of the four is licensed by the MGCB to accept sports wagers in Michigan.

“Illegal gambling doesn’t stop at state or national borders, and neither can our response,” Williams said. “Working with IAGR and our fellow regulators lets us share information and act faster to protect players here in Michigan and around the world.”

The new CheckBeforeYouPlay.org tool, contributed by regulatory technology company Sharp Vision, lets consumers enter a gambling site’s web address and check available licensing information for participating IAGR member jurisdictions, drawing on regulatory records and other verified public sources. During the week, the MGCB will also share IAGR campaign videos and social media content on its channels.

How to protect yourself:

- Check the MGCB’s list of licensed online casinos and sportsbooks at Michigan.gov/MGCB or enter the site’s address at CheckBeforeYouPlay.org, before creating an account, depositing money, or sharing personal information.
- Be wary of sites that accept cryptocurrency only, promise guaranteed winnings, or don’t ask you to verify your age and identity.
- Don’t judge a site by how it looks. Some illegal sites look legitimate, using flashy promotions, promises of easy winnings, and familiar-looking brands to earn your trust.
- Gambling ads are everywhere: on social media, in search results, and even in your inbox. Whether a site is promoted by an ad or an influencer, confirm it is licensed in Michigan before you click.
- Report suspected illegal gambling to the MGCB at 1-888-314-2682 or MIGamblingTip@michigan.gov.

Anyone concerned about their gambling, or someone else’s, can call the Michigan Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800-GAMBLER for free, confidential help, 24 hours a day. Michigan residents can also enroll in the state’s Responsible Gaming Database to exclude themselves from licensed gambling.

For more about Illegal Gambling Awareness Week, visit CheckBeforeYouPlay.org, and follow the MGCB on Facebook and Instagram and look for #PlayItSafe throughout November.

Play it safe. Bet legal. Online casino games, online poker, and sports betting in Michigan are for adults 21 and older.

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*Gambling in any form is for entertainment purposes only. If you or someone you know may have a gambling problem, call **1-800-GAMBLER**, chat online, or visit 800gambler.org. Help is available 24/7, free and confidential. Michigan residents can also visit the MGCB's Responsible Gaming page for information on self-exclusion programs, including the Disassociated Persons List and the Internet Gaming and Sports Betting Responsible Gaming Database. Through a partnership with Gamban, Michigan residents can claim a free license for Gamban's gambling blocking software — visit Michigan.gov/MGCB to learn more. Additional responsible gaming tools are available at DontRegretTheBet.org. The Michigan Gaming Control Board shall ensure the conduct of fair and honest gaming to protect the interests of Michigan citizens. Learn more at Michigan.gov/MGCB.*