

**DIOCESE OF PENNSYLVANIA
R-9
243rd CONVENTION
OCTOBER 10,2026**

Designated contact person for this resolution:

Name: John R. Wallace

Email: wallaj3@gmail.com

Phone: 610-420-4305

TITLE: On Novel Gambling Media

RESOLVED, that the 243rd Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania direct that the following resolution be submitted for consideration by the 82nd Convention of the Episcopal Church:

Resolved, that the 82nd General Convention of The Episcopal Church, noting with deep concern the proliferation of prediction markets and sports betting in recent years, and the deleterious effect that these have in contemporary society, hereby urge Congress and all officials at the national, state, and local levels to work to more seriously recognize and define problem gambling and gambling disorder as a national crisis; and be it further

Resolved, that the General Convention heartily discourage participation in sports betting and the utilization of prediction markets as a means for personal gain among the people of the Episcopal Church, and urge the reform of local, state, and federal laws concerning gambling and its promotion to safeguard the integrity of those activities, including sporting events and business activities, from intentional interference; and be it further

Resolved, that the General Convention reaffirm the positions articulated by the Lambeth Conference of 1948 and the House of Bishops in 1951 regarding the impropriety of funding the work of the Church through gambling of any kind, and communicate the same to the several dioceses of the Episcopal Church; and be it further

Resolved, that the General Convention direct, consistent with established policies and procedures, that the Executive Council refer this Resolution to the Office of Government Relations and to other such bodies as it may deem fit, so that it may take all actions necessary to accomplish the intentions and purposes of this Resolution.

AND BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, That this 243rd Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania call upon the congregations of the Diocese to heighten awareness of research and resources for problem gambling and gambling disorder, particularly through such opportunities as Mental Health Sunday (the Sunday closest to October 10) and the provision of space, as appropriate, for the hosting of gambling disorder support groups, and to report the same through the Diocesan Council; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this 243rd Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania express its appreciation to the members of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court for its recognition that many “Skill Games” have functioned as unregulated gambling devices, noting that these devices are disproportionately sited among people already affected by crime, poverty, and structural disenfranchisement, and in several cases have been an inciting factor in violent crime; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Secretary of this Convention be directed to communicate this Resolution to the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, those members of the Congress and the Legislature who represent districts included wholly or partially within the Diocese of Pennsylvania, and to the leadership of the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board.

EXPLANATION:

In Scripture, the casting of lots was initially regarded as a means to discern God’s will free of favoritism or politicking, as in the division of land among the tribes of Israel, the electing of various positions in the Temple, and the calling of Matthias to take the place of Judas Iscariot. Corrupted by sin, and made into a tool of Empire, it became a means toward personal gain, most notoriously at the foot of the Cross in the form of Roman soldiers dividing Christ’s meager earthly possessions for themselves. Resolution 44 of the 1948 Lambeth Conference specifically condemned the practice of raising funds for the Church through gambling, and generally deplored the raising of money “through sweepstakes and similar methods, however good may the be the object”; while the 167th Convention of the Diocese of Pennsylvania (1951) voted to condemn “the practice of gambling and any move to legalize it.” When the Pennsylvania Lottery was established in 1971, this body took no action.

The 2018 *Murphy v. NCAA* decision by the Supreme Court effectively legalized state-sponsored sports betting, opening the door to the creation of an industry which, in 2025, reported profits of nearly \$17 billion across 38 states and the District of Columbia. Sports betting is closely tied to “prediction markets,” which have, in response to consumer demand over the past five years, expanded their offerings from sporting events to allow persons to bet upon economic trends, business deals, military engagements, and meteorological events. Although this may at first sound harmless, there are far graver consequences for the soul, from duplicity (in “throwing” a game where money is at stake, or engaging in insider-trading, or publishing deliberately false information to increase the odds of a windfall), to enriching oneself as a byproduct of human suffering (say, based on predicting where a hurricane will make landfall, or where a tornado may occur, or when a ceasefire deal will collapse).

It is well established that gambling functions as a “regressive tax” because it disproportionately affects poorer households. That so many of these novel media are marketed as “safer,” or are geared to specific interests (particularly sports) may contribute to larger issues of societal alienation in younger, male, and minority members of society.

Dozens of countries have taken steps to limit the operation of prediction markets; due to the current political landscape and the lucrative nature of the gambling industry, such an act is not immediately likely in the United States. Nonetheless, the Church must raise her voice when confronted by a grave societal evil, and this resolution, the bulk of which is to be presented for consideration at the 82nd General Convention in Phoenix next summer, provides a means to continue that worthy effort.

INDIVIDUAL OR DIOCESAN BODY RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS
RESOLUTION:

- The Secretary of the Convention (for those components addressing the resolution to General Convention and the communication of this resolution to state and local officials)
- The Diocesan Council Committee on Poverty and Social Concerns (for the local and regional coordination and reception of responses)
- Parish clergy, wardens, and vestries (for the provision of information and support at the congregational level)