

Big Debate

This month we ask: Should we expect one or more US states to pass online sports betting legislation in 2025?



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For more than five years, we had great success passing bills across the US. The final wave of states have always been expected to be the most difficult, but even in these 'hard to pass' states, momentum is growing.

Nebraska is a key state to watch. After a bill advanced during last year's special session with strong gubernatorial support, lawmakers have made online sports betting a 2025 priority. With the governor seeking funds for property tax relief and growing evidence of Nebraskans crossing

into Iowa to place bets, we anticipate action as early as February.

Minnesota also holds promise. Stakeholders reached consensus on a bill last year, though it was too late for passage. With those agreements in place, the legislative process in 2025 should be streamlined. However, political changes in who controls the legislature and potential amendments that could stifle market competitiveness remain a challenge to overcome.

Wisconsin's tribes are leading the charge by exploring statewide mobile expansion. The recent Seminole-Florida precedent strengthens their case, signaling a broader tribal push to leverage exclusivity into digital sports betting and igaming opportunities nationwide.

On the igaming front, Maryland faces mounting budgetary pressures, while regulated igaming represents a significant untapped revenue source. After a House-approved bill faltered in the Senate last year, growing bipartisan support for revenue solutions this year makes it a near-term opportunity.

Wyoming is another promising contender. A state-commissioned report underscored the financial and consumer protection benefits of igaming, laying the groundwork for legislation that could combat illegal gambling while bolstering state revenues.

With strong consumer demand, clear fiscal benefits and legislative momentum, 2025 is set to be an important year for US online gambling legislation. ●

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Since the repeal of PASPA in May 2018, 39 states plus the District of Columbia have legalised sports betting. I'm a big proponent of legalised sports betting and have been fully engaged to move legalisation efforts throughout the US since my days of quarterbacking the successful New Jersey campaign to repeal PASPA. But I don't believe 2025 will see much, if any, movement. The prospect of further legalisation narrows with the remaining 11 states, as many have unsuccessfully

attempted to advance legislation. But many challenges remain.

Only one state passed legislation in 2024. On 5 November, Missouri passed Amendment 2 with a narrow margin, 50.05% to 49.95%. The election results were certified on 5 December, making Missouri the 39th state to legalise sports betting. It will launch in H1 2025.

Of the remaining 11 states, three will likely never pass legislation: Alaska, Idaho and Utah. Six states – Alabama, Georgia, Minnesota, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Hawaii – have introduced legislation without success. The final two states are California and Texas.

Texas, with 31 million residents, has a legislature that meets every couple of years. It is back in session in 2025.

Yet several hurdles in Texas remain. Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick sets the agenda in the Senate and is a powerful force. He remains a roadblock to allow sports betting and is critical to movement happening.

California has 39 million residents and attempted to pass two ballot referendums in 2022, one backed by the industry and the other backed by the tribes. Both substantially failed. Legal sports betting will have to wait until 2026 at the earliest, in all likelihood.

The most likely state to pass legislation in 2025 is Minnesota, but there are several obstacles, including the horseracing industry and the tribes. The prospect for progress in 2025 is not great but I hope I am wrong. ●