

Gloucester Times

Anti-gambling group disappointed in Healey's fantasy sports regulations

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By Michael Norton State House News Service

Gambling opponents are bashing Attorney General Maura Healey's proposed fantasy sports regulations, saying the rules "represent the biggest expansion of gambling in Massachusetts history, forcing online gambling into every bedroom, living room and smart phone in the state."

In a letter to Healey, who made her opposition to casinos a platform in her 2014 campaign, Stop Predatory Lending National Director Les Bernal wrote, "The fact that regulations such as these are even being proposed by your office, instead of taking decisive action to shut down these white collar offenders of the state's gambling laws, gives an appearance of the same kind of two-tiered justice we have seen at the federal level toward the well-heeled. You and your team are better than the approach you have taken on this issue. As more facts come in, I hope you will revisit your strategy."

Bernal referenced a New York Times Magazine article that highlighted a practice called "bumhunting," or seeking out and exploiting inexperienced players and said the industry can't be trusted to ensure that the practice ceases.

In November, Healey said her review of daily fantasy sports games uncovered "a number of significant concerns" and announced proposed regulations, including a ban on players under the age of 21.

The regulations also ban fantasy games based on college sports, advertising for fantasy games at high school and college campuses, and accepting total deposits of more than \$1,000 a month from most players.

At a press conference in Boston, Healey described the regulations as the first of their kind and said they are intended to protect consumers who are selecting athletes and placing wagers with the hopes of winning jackpots by outscoring other fantasy sports participants.