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Gaming Legislation

Michigan Gaming Control Board Highlights Enforcement Efforts Against Illegal Gambling

The Michigan Gaming Control Board ("MGCB") released a report on November 13, 2026, highlighting its ongoing efforts to combat illegal gambling operations throughout the state. The announcement coincides with Illegal Gambling Awareness Week, November 9–13, and outlines the agency's enforcement actions against offshore sportsbooks, online casinos, illegal gaming machines, and unlicensed prediction market operators.

Below Please find the Full MGCB Report:

DETROIT, Nov. 13, 2026 — This week is Illegal Gambling Awareness Week, Nov. 9–13, and the Michigan Gaming Control Board (MGCB) has spent the past two years showing what it looks like to fight back. When the MGCB, under the leadership of Executive Director Henry Williams, ordered offshore sportsbook Bovada out of the state in May 2024, many in the industry took notice. Bovada left Michigan, and other states soon followed Michigan's lead. That first letter marked the start of what trade and national press now describe as the most aggressive state-level campaign against illegal gambling in the country.

Michigan's record goes back further. In 2023, the MGCB was an early actor against sweepstakes casinos, operators that, as MGCB Chief of Staff Kurt Steinkamp told The Washington Post, ignored consumer protections and Michigan's 21-and-over age limit. Since then, the agency has steadily widened its reach across offshore casinos and sportsbooks, sweepstakes sites, and unlicensed prediction markets.

"Illegal gambling operators target Michigan residents while offering none of the protections our laws require," said MGCB Executive Director Henry Williams. "These results belong to our entire team: the investigators, analysts, and staff who work these cases every day, along with our partners at the Michigan Department of Attorney General. Their work is why Michigan has become a model for other states, and we will keep at it until illegal operators understand that Michigan is off-limits."

Gaming Legislation

A Program That Scaled Fast

What began with one letter has become a relentless, month-after-month campaign. Since the MGCB began targeting offshore sites in mid-2024, 259 illegal online gambling sites have received cease-and-desist letters. Of those, 166 have complied, a 64.1% compliance rate. That rate is up from the roughly 50% the agency reported at the Global Gaming Expo (G2E) in October 2025.

Key milestones along the way:

- **May 2024:** First offshore order, to Bovada, which left Michigan within 14 days.
- **April 2026:** A 45-operator sweep, the largest four-month action in the program's history.
- **October 2026:** More than 30 offshore operators ordered out of the state.

The results show up in player behavior. GeoComply data covering March 2023 to March 2025 recorded a sharp drop in Michigan searches for, and traffic to, offshore brands that had received MGCB letters.

Those gains show up in the market as a whole. A March 2026 study by iGaming analytics firm Blask ranked Michigan first among fully regulated states for channelization, the share of gambling activity that goes to legal, licensed operators. About 75% of Michigan consumers' activity goes through legal operators, well above the roughly 62% average for the fully regulated states studied.

Two things put Michigan at the top: the state legalized a broad range of gaming, giving residents safe and accessible legal options, and the MGCB has aggressively cracked down on the illegal operators competing with them.

Enforcement on the Ground

The agency's work is not limited to the internet. Between Oct. 1, 2022, and Oct. 31, 2026, after receiving MGCB cease-and-desist letters, 281 locations offering illegal gaming machines to Michigan residents removed a total of 682 machines.

When operators refuse to comply, cases move to prosecution. Joint MGCB and Michigan Department of Attorney General investigations produced 146 convictions, 1,824 seized machines, and $598,524.98 in seized cash since 2015. Agency staff have noted that illegal machine distributors exploit legal loopholes and often place machines in underserved communities, where players have the least protection.

Transparency as a Strategy

The MGCB's approach rests on openness. Every cease-and-desist letter is announced publicly, and the MGCB keeps a public list of offending operators.

Steinkamp has said this publicity alerts payment processors, social media companies, internet service providers, data hosts, regulators, and others operating in regulated markets. He has urged regulators to actively engage with the supply chain of these illegal operators in an effort to disrupt business

operations when they fail to comply with the state's orders.

Enforcement is paired with public education through the "Play It Safe. Bet Legal." awareness campaign. The agency recently expanded the campaign with radio public service announcements that will run well beyond the international Illegal Gambling Awareness Week, reminding residents to make sure an online casino or sportsbook is licensed in Michigan before they place a bet.

Working with the Michigan Department of Attorney General, the MGCB has also taken on unlicensed sports prediction markets. In June 2026, a temporary restraining order barred KalshiEX from offering sports contracts in Michigan, and Robinhood (September), Coinbase (October), and Polymarket (October) have each agreed to stop offering sports wagering contracts to Michigan customers.

"Illegal operators take money from Michigan residents without offering any of the protections that come with a license: no age checks, no responsible gaming tools, and no one to turn to when something goes wrong," said MGCB Chief of Staff Kurt Steinkamp.

"Every operator we push out of Michigan is one less risk to our residents, and one less dollar drained from the schools and communities that legal gaming supports. That's the result of people across this agency doing careful, persistent work every day. Our commitment to protecting Michigan players is unwavering, and we're not slowing down."

A Team Effort

The results reflect work across the MGCB. Investigators identify illegal sites and machines and follow up on every letter, the Attorney General's legal staff build the cases that hold up in court, and MGCB communications staff carry the agency's message to the public. Tips from Michigan residents who report suspected illegal gambling are key components of this collective effort.

Recognized Beyond Michigan

Industry leaders and other states have taken notice. American Gaming Association President and CEO Bill Miller credited the MGCB with proving that states can fight back against illegal operators, and industry executives have praised Michigan for setting a national example after the Bovada order.

Steinkamp's comments to The Washington Post were cited in 2025 testimony before the Maryland General Assembly on sweepstakes legislation, and outlets including Covers have described the MGCB as leading the way nationally.

The agency's leaders have become sought-after voices on the issue. Steinkamp spoke at G2E in 2024, 2025, and 2026, the National Council of Legislators from Gaming States (NCLGS) summer meeting, and the 2026 East Coast Gaming Congress, where he joined regulators from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Florida.

He is scheduled to speak next week at the Payments, Fraud & Compliance Gaming Leaders' Summit – Americas in Miami, November 16–17.

Gaming

Leading the nation in moving players to the regulated market is a milestone, not a finish line. Illegal operators keep finding new ways to reach Michigan residents, and the MGCB will not relent in finding and stopping them, during Illegal Gambling Awareness Week and every week after.

Michigan residents can help by reporting suspected illegal gambling to the MGCB at **1-888-314-2682** or **MIGamblingTip@michigan.gov**, and by confirming that an online casino or sportsbook is licensed in Michigan before placing a bet.

MGCB Ex. Director Williams and Board Chair Townsend Highlight MGCB and Michigan Attorney Generals staff successful efforts to combat Sports Betting Prediction Markets in Michigan

At the Tuesday, November 10, 2026 MGCB Public Meeting, Ex. Director Henry Williams highlighted the state agency and Michigan Attorney General's efforts to stop sports betting prediction market offerings by Kalshi, Coinbase, Polymarket and Robinhood in the state of Michigan. Director Williams highlighted the efforts of the Alcohol & Gambling Enforcement Division led Jerry Whalen, along with Felipe H. Hall, Jason A. Geissler, Lauren Fitzsimmons and Bethany McCune for their efforts in managing the state's litigation efforts. Director Williams also recognized Susan Womble, Division Head Secretary, for keeping all of the filings organized as there have been numerous litigation matters in state and federal court.

Director Williams further highlighted the efforts of John Lessnau and all of the MGCB regulation officers and support staff in the Criminal Investigation Unit for supporting the AG's efforts. He also recognized the keen role played by his Chief of Staff Kurt Steinkamp and Deputy Director of Licensing Tina Alagna in connection with combating sports prediction markets in the state while litigation navigates through the court systems.

MGCB Chairperson Jim Townsend made the following remarks during the public meeting:

“I want to reinforce the outstanding work that’s been done by the MGCB team. Every month, I’m impressed by the incredible volume of work accomplished by a relatively small group of people. Most recently, their efforts to stand up to prediction markets and defend Michigan’s gaming laws have been particularly impressive. However, regardless of what happens in court, these new market entrants will continue to put pressure on the gaming industry. That will place even greater responsibility on the MGCB to enforce its regulations and ensure that Michigan residents and their interests are protected.”

Click for the Link to the MCGB public meeting