

Chicago Issues Last-Minute Sports Betting Licenses, Keeping Platforms Open In 2026



Good news for Chicago bettors: Legal online sports betting entered 2026 without any interruptions.

Just before midnight on January 1, city officials issued municipal licenses to major operators—**bet365, BetMGM, DraftKings, FanDuel, & Fanatics**. This averted a potential shutdown that the operators had warned about.

With licenses secured, the **Sports Betting Alliance (SBA)** withdrew its request for a temporary restraining order and praised the city for preserving access to regulated platforms that offer better consumer protections than illegal alternatives.

Legal Battle Continues

The broader lawsuit lives on. The SBA argues that Chicago lacks authority under state law to impose its new **10.25% tax** on online bets or require city-level licenses. They plan to challenge the ordinances as unconstitutional in court.

Bigger Picture in Springfield

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The dispute has caught lawmakers' attention. Bills like **HB 4171** (Rep. Dan Didech) and its Senate companion (Sen. Patrick Joyce) aim to confirm that only the state can regulate, tax, or license sports betting.

What's Next

The case heads to a merits hearing in Cook County Circuit Court in **March 2026**. Until then, Chicago residents can continue placing legal bets seamlessly on all major apps.

A sigh of relief for now - but the fight over local vs. state control is far from over. Stay tuned!

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