



WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DIANA GOODE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CONNECTICUT COUNCIL ON PROBLEM GAMBLING

PUBLIC SAFETY & SECURITY COMMITTEE

Thursday, March 03, 2022

S.B. No. 140 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING STUDIES OF THE EFFECT OF LEGALIZED GAMBLING IN THE STATE.

Sen. Osten, Rep. Horn and Members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill to study the effect of legalized gambling. My name is Diana Goode, Executive Director of the Connecticut Council on Problem Gambling (CCPG).

Connecticut has approximately 3,565,000 citizens. That means that over 100,000 citizens and over 275,000 family members are negatively impacted by gambling every day. Using current population models, gambling related problems directly affects 735 individuals and 1,911 family members in each House district and 3,056 individuals and 7,946 family members in each Senate district.

It is our strong recommendation that the state, through a neutral organization or institution of higher education, conduct surveys of the prevalence of gambling related harm, this is especially necessary given the new landscape after the expansion of legalized gambling (i.e., sports betting, online wagering, casino expansion) and at regular periods thereafter to monitor impacts and have data that will support evidence-based mitigation efforts. Data collected by regulated operators on gambling activity should be made publicly available through the regulatory agency to qualified researchers to help support mitigation efforts. To safeguard consumers, this data should be encrypted and de-identified to remove personally identifying information, consistent with federal and state privacy, intellectual property, and freedom of information laws.

The bill language calls for the study of gambling activity engaged in by the public and the desirability of expanding, maintaining, or reducing the amount of legalized gambling permitted in this state. We feel that the study and collection of this data must be conducted by an independent provider that isn't affiliated with the gaming industry to completely ensure impartiality.

While the CCPG does not advocate for or against gambling, we feel that it is necessary to ensure that the state has a robust problem gambling safety net to help those individuals and families impacted by problem gambling and to reduce harms. Additionally, the need to educate those that choose to gamble about responsible gambling strategies is vital to ensuring that those consumers have the knowledge at their disposal to play safer. We can't do that without understanding the scope of gambling's impact on

our community. These studies are a necessary tool in strategically directing resources to protecting Connecticut's citizens from gambling related harms.

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The Connecticut Council on Problem Gambling (CCPG) is a non-profit organization focused on preventing problem gambling and helping those who may be impacted. CCPG does not advocate for or against gambling but is committed to working with all stakeholders to help individuals and families dealing with this issue.

CCPG provides Connecticut's only 24-hour Problem Gambling Helpline – offering support via phone, live online chat, and text. We also implement prevention and education programs serving schools, veterans, and at-risk populations.

If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, call the Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-888-789-7777 or visit www.ccp.org/chat for confidential help.