



Derek Longmeier, Executive Director of Problem Gambling Network of Ohio  
Interested Party Testimony  
Ohio State Senate Select Committee on Gaming  
May 19, 2021

Chairman Schuring, Vice-Chair Manning, and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony as an interested party regarding SB176. Problem Gambling Network of Ohio's mission is to build a network of support for those impacted by gambling through collaboration, education and research. We appreciate your time and dedication to these important issues. PGNO takes a neutral stance on gambling and we have no financial interest in sports wagering or e-bingo in Ohio.

The complexities related to both e-bingo and sports betting are vast. We request that these issues be addressed in two independent bills. This will allow for an appropriate level of engagement from subject matter experts on each topic and will permit dedicated attention to each area of expansion.

PGNO's focus is to ensure sufficient resources are available and protections are in place to mitigate harm that will result from expanded gambling. PGNO and our network of gambling support experts, many of whom are constituents in your districts, can serve as unbiased resources to support you in more thoroughly understanding the impact of gambling expansion as well as identifying necessary components needed to protect Ohioans.

We know from the *Ohio Gambling Study*, and others, that as gambling access increases, so do the negative effects of gambling. We also know that when neighboring states have expanded gambling, they have experienced increased demand for gambling support services. It is critical to have resources available to help those in need. Unlike substance use and mental health issues, no federal funds are available to support those impacted by gambling. Problems that result due to expansion must be paid for with funds generated from expansion.

We at PGNO and our members thank you for taking the time for due diligence. We understand that there is pressure to get a bill done; however, we ask you not to let the pace of sports wagering rollouts and further gaming expansion in other states force a process that will require cleanup later. Our infrastructure and processes are commonly referred to by the National Council on Problem Gambling, and other national experts as the 'Ohio Model' the example of what other states should be doing. Please focus on determining a strategy and timeline that is right for Ohio, so that we can continue to lead the nation. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony as an interested party and I look forward to answering your questions.

Linley, J., Frohnafel-Hasson, S., Sherba, R. T. (n.d.). 2017 Survey of At-Risk and Problem Gambling Prevalence Among Ohioans. Columbus, OH: Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.