

Ohio Senate Select Committee on Gaming

Kelly Garza
Interested Party Testimony
Ohio State Senate Select Committee on Gaming
June 10, 2021

Chairman Schuring, Vice-Chair Manning, Ranking Member Craig and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony as an interested party regarding SB176.

I appreciate your time and dedication to these important issues and I would like to provide a local perspective as to how gambling has impacted fellow Ohioans in my community. We know from the *Ohio Gambling Study*, and others research, that according to the 2017 survey, the 0.9% of Ohio adults estimated to be problem gamblers is significantly below the national average rates of past-year prevalence of problem gambling at 2.2% (NCPG). ♣ The average rates of Gambling Disorder in the U.S. in the past year are approximately 1-2.2% (Barnes, Welte, et al. 2015, Kessler, Hwang, et al. 2008, Williams, Volberg, et al. 2012). ♣ Adults at low to high risk for gambling disorder increased from 5.7% of the Ohio population in 2012 to 10.3% in 2017, with the gambling disorder group at 0.9%. ♣ More Ohioans gambled in the current survey than in the baseline survey. ♣ In the 2012 baseline survey, more men than women were in the at-risk/problem gambling group, but in the 2017 survey, problem gambling was almost even between men and women. ♣ Problem gambling can affect anyone. However, based on Ohio's survey findings, populations at the highest risk for developing gambling problems are males 18-24, African Americans, adults of Hispanic ethnicity, and people with substance use disorder or serious depression. ♣ Other high-risk groups include veterans, teenagers, trauma victims, people with Traumatic Brain Injury, older adults, those who use medications for Parkinson's and Restless Leg Syndrome. ♣ Of people with Gambling Disorder, 38% have thoughts of suicide; 32% have made a suicide attempt; 21% of all people who attempt suicide, say that it is gambling related (Hodgins, et al 2006)

As I look at the impact that gambling has had on my community, I want to make sure that resources are available and protections are in place to lessen further harm: **Minimum Responsible Gambling Measures for Sports Wagering:**

- Set and enforce the minimum legal age to wager at 21 and include age verification measures.
- Dedicated funds (2-5%) of all sports wagering tax revenue to be directed to prevent, treat & research gambling addiction and mitigation of harms.
- Designate the Ohio Casino Control Commission as the regulatory agency.
- Require responsible gaming programs, which include comprehensive employee training, self-exclusion, ability to set limits on time and money spent.
- Requirements for the inclusion of help/prevention messages in all marketing and promotion.
- Clear marketing guidelines to provide clarity of promotions, odds of winning, and the costs to participate.
- Include the Ohio Problem Gambling Helpline and/or other statewide resources on all communications from the

operators. • Permit sports wagering at casino/racino properties, and if mobile, only provide for one mobile license/property. • Limit sports wagering to US professional sports. • Include sports betting in the Ohio Voluntary Exclusion program. **Minimum Responsible Gambling Measures for E-Bingo:** • Designate the Ohio Casino Control Commission as the regulatory agency. • Set and enforce the minimum legal age to wager at 18. Operators have an affirmative obligation to put in place technical and operational measures to prevent access by those who are underage. • Dedicate a portion of the funds from licensing to prevent, treat & research gambling addiction and mitigation of harms. • Require e-bingo operators to implement responsible training for all staff and volunteers, which shall include warning signs of problem gambling and gambling help resources. • Require help/prevention messages in all marketing and promotion. • Have clear marketing guidelines to prevent targeting vulnerable populations, including: youth, elderly, military and minorities. • Include the Ohio Problem Gambling Helpline and/or other statewide resources on all communications from the operators • Set limits for the number of e-bingo machines per establishment. • Limit e-bingo to inside each licensed establishment.

I, along with my fellow Behavior Based Addiction Network of Northwest Ohio, PGNO Board, and Zepf Center's Problem Gambling Prevention and Treatment Department can provide you with subject matter experts regarding the impact of gambling. Based on my experience and expertise, I would expect protections for gambling to include age verification, dedicated funds for problem gambling services—prevention and treatment, training/screening requirements for staff and volunteers.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony as an interested party. I look forward to working with you further on these, and other, important issues impacting Ohioans.

Kelly A. Garza, LSW, LCDC III, OCPC, TTS
Prevention Services Coordinator
Zepf Center
20025 Ashland Ave.
Toledo, Ohio 43620
www.zepfcenter.org
kgarza@zepfcenter.org
419-508-0272



Linley, J., Frohnapfel-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.