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Interested Party Testimony
Ohio State Senate Select Committee on Gaming
June 10, 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 is neutral regarding legalized gambling and gambling expansion, and has no financial interest in expanded gambling in Ohio. As we've learned from our state gambling surveys, increased access to gambling results in increased rates of problem gambling. Furthermore, expanded gambling opportunities expose new audiences to gambling, resulting in an increased demand for prevention, intervention and treatment services.

PGNO, as well as our partners in the larger behavioral health field, appreciate your openness to adding consumer protections to this legislation that address the continued evolution of gambling in Ohio. PGNO recommends minimum responsible gambling measures for inclusion in SB176, such as:

- Designate the Ohio Casino Control Commission to serve as the regulatory state agency for both e-bingo and all of sports gaming.
- Set and enforce the minimum legal age to wager and include age verification measures.
- Dedicate funds (2-5%) of all sports wagering tax revenue and a portion of e-bingo licensing fees for the prevention, treatment & research gambling addiction.
- Require responsible gaming programs at all locations of sports wagering and e-bing. These include comprehensive employee training, self-exclusion, as well as the ability to set limits on time, and money spent.
- Have clear marketing guidelines to provide clarity of promotions, odds of winning, and the costs to participate.
- Require the inclusion of help and/or prevention messages in all marketing and promotion.
- Include the Ohio Problem Gambling Helpline and/or other statewide resources on all communications from the operators.

Ohio has a history of collaboration when it comes to this issue. The gambling treatment field began in our state. Ohio has developed award-winning campaigns, drawn on national and international expertise and tracked statewide and community-specific data regarding gambling prevalence, which includes: casino, lottery, stocks, sports, and other avenues, like bingo and raffles.

The 2017 Survey of At-Risk and Problem Gambling Prevalence Among Ohioans, conducted by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and released by Ohio Responsible Gambling, which includes the Ohio Lottery Commission and the Ohio Casino Control Commission, found that the prevalence of at-risk and problem gamblers has doubled since the four casinos and seven racinos opened in Ohio.

As with other forms of gambling, there is a significant portion of the population who experience negative consequences as a result of gambling. It is incumbent upon our governmental bodies to help both operators and their customers by requiring reasonable regulations that will ensure the health and safety of our citizens. PGNO believes that the recommendations indicated above, paired with efforts to combat illegal operations, and collaboration between regulators, operators, and prevention and treatment professionals will mitigate some of the harm caused by expanded gambling in Ohio.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony as an interested party and I look forward to answering your questions.

Linley, J., Frohnappel-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.