



Submitted Testimony to the Ohio House Finance Committee  
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Thank you Chairman Stewart and members of the committee for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to HB 476.

My name is Dean Hestermann. I am Vice President, Issues Management and Strategic Communications for Caesars Entertainment. In Ohio, Caesars operates mobile sports betting through the Caesars Sportsbook app, as well as owns and operates Eldorado Scioto Downs, here in Columbus. Caesars is also a business partner of the Cleveland Cavaliers. Additionally, Caesars operates more than 50 casinos in 18 states, sports betting in more than 30 states, as well as iGaming in five states.

While HB 476 purports to simply authorize online raffles, a close examination of the bill suggests that in practice it will permit casino-style online gambling, with none of the protections and safeguards associated with licensed, regulated iGaming as currently practiced in the seven states that authorize it.

There are no limits on the frequency of games or game themes. One can easily imagine an interactive “lottery” game that mimics slot machines and casino games, much like electronic “bingo” machines have morphed into games not recognizable as bingo.

Furthermore, HB 476 fails to provide the following:

- Effectively enforced age limits, self-exclusion, and customer education requirements;
- KYC, compliance, and anti-money laundering requirements;
- Consumer protection, fairness and transparency in gaming operations, including the use of certified random number generators, secure payment processing, and clear terms and conditions for players;
- Employee responsible gaming training;
- Protections against fraudulent, “hit and run” operators;
- Maintenance of cash reserves and protection of customer assets;
- Geo-location to keep gambling within state borders;

- Protections against organized crime through investigating, licensing, and regular auditing of operators that ensures integrity and probity; and
- Problem gambling prevention and mitigation through linkages to problem gambling services; spending, betting, play duration, and other limits; and proactive outreach to customers whose play may show elevated risk.

In summary, we believe that HB 476 is an internet gambling proposal disguised as a modernization of charitable raffles, and that in many respects its passage will be a disservice to the residents of Ohio.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to express the reasons for our opposition to HB 476.