



SELECT COMMITTEE ON GAMING

Witness Form

Today's Date 5/17/21

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Organization Representing: Self

Testifying on Bill Number: SB 176

Testimony: Verbal Written Both

Testifying As: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist? Yes No

Special Requests: _____

SB 176 Testimony - Ashley Hartman

Chairman Schuring, Vice Chair Manning, and members of the Senate Select Committee on Gambling, thank you for allowing me to provide written testimony for Senate Bill 176, which would legalize sports gambling and e-bingo.

This bill would massively increase opportunities to gambling in Ohio. As a problem gambling prevention professional and subject matter expert on responsible gambling, I am concerned about the lack of protections included in this bill. The Problem Gambling Network of Ohio is a state organization composed of problem gambling professionals, gambling regulators and operators, and people directly impacted by problem gambling. PGNO, based on expert consensus, has developed principles for responsible gaming/gambling legislation. This includes minimum standards for new regulations and legislation to legalized and regulated gambling in Ohio. This bill does not meet these minimum standards. Let me emphasize that these are the minimum standards set by professionals in problem gambling prevention, treatment, regulation and operations.

This bill would lead to a massive increase in opportunities to gamble throughout Ohio with far too few protections. As a problem gambling professional, this leaves me deeply concerned. The process to pass this legislation is incredibly rushed, and ill informed. When increasing access to gambling in our state, it is imperative to consult subjective matter experts with expertise in responsible gambling regulations, and practices. As currently written, this bill would put many Ohioans and their families at risk.

Disordered Gambling is associated with the highest rate of suicide among all addictions. In my work, I have met with individuals and families that have been deeply harmed by gambling. Their children have lost their lives as a result of their addiction. Families have been broken, left extensive financial and legal issues. As a problem gambling professional, I take a neutral stance in regards to gambling expansion. What I am not neutral on is the inclusion of appropriate precautions and protections.

Ohio has a long history of collaboration between people in problem gambling recovery, their families, treatment and prevention providers, and gambling regulators and operators. Sadly, this bill departs from that proud tradition of collaboration in responsible gambling. Ohioans deserve better. I challenge this committee to reconsider the pace in which this bill is moving, and take the appropriate time to hear from the subject matter expertise, and Ohios that have been personally impacted by problem gambling. This is the least Ohioans deserve.

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