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Dear Co-Chair Fonfara, Co-Chair Berger and members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee:

My name is Rayallen Bergman and I am the Program Coordinator with the Southeastern Regional Action Council (SERAC) based in Southeastern CT.

I am here to voice my concerns of H.B. No. 7054 (RAISED) FINANCE, REVENUE AND BONDING- 'AN ACT CONCERNING KENO'.

The geography of Southeastern Connecticut sets us apart from the rest of Connecticut. Two of the country's largest Gaming Casinos are located within 10 miles of each other. Did you know that studies show that "living within a 10 mile radius of a casino is a risk factor for problem gambling" (Williams et al, 2011).

SERAC has surveyed nearly 20,000 youth, from 7-12th grade in our region from 2006-2014 regarding their risky behavior. Our survey does include questions on youth gambling behaviors. Currently, 8% (or 1600 youth) report that someone in their family has gambled so much that it created problems at home, at work or with friends. Overall, about 19% of youth report gambling at least once in their lifetime while 3% of youth report that they gamble on a daily basis. Our region is also host to 5 very unique Colleges and Universities; United States Coast Guard Academy, Connecticut College, Mitchell College, Three Rivers Community College and University of Connecticut: Avery Point. Prevalence of gambling rates on College campuses is twice that of general population. So by the sheer number of colleges in a small vicinity, all within 10 miles of the casino, we have a real cause for concern that already exist but is not talk about..

The addition of Keno to Southeastern CT, will foster more problem and pathological gambling, in our region and state. Gambling has become normalized in our society. It will no longer be behind doors and a secret past-time. Casinos and gambling are now viewed very positively by a large percentage of the adult population as well as younger individuals. We know that the two main reasons children like to gamble is for the enjoyment it brings and the fact that they can also win some money. This is very powerful and entices young people to gamble because they have very few ways of making money. With Keno, there is little over-site on who is playing in restaurants and bars. We also know, when there is perceived to be little risk involved, policies and safe guards are not put in place or followed-up on. The reality, gambling addictions is not currently a high enough perceived risk to the majority of the population. Where in fact, the introduction of Keno to young people with begin to increase gambling addiction in a lower age group and increase our rates significantly.

In addition, the current outlines of this bill, the two Tribes will be earning a contracted 12.5 percent of total revenues. Currently, the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services: Problem Gambling Services is maintaining statewide prevention, treatment and recovery services through 1% of the slot specific revenue from the casinos. This needs to be taken into account, when considering a statewide introduction of Keno. A higher percentage of

the revenue needs to be put towards prevention, treatment and recovery!

According to the CT School Health survey, in 2013, 28% of high school seniors students had gambled for money or possessions in the past 12 months compared to 25% in 2011. Also in 2013, the rate among males (31%) was significantly higher than the rate among females (10%).

With the introduction of Keno, the values of these percentages presented here will significantly increase. We must continue to shield our state and our youth from the frequency and accessibility Keno offers. As the current systems for prevention, treatment and recovery systems are unequipped to address the current condition in our state, as this pathology consists.

Thank you,

Rayallen Bergman, B.S.

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