

Opposing Gambling expansion

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My name is Linda Lentini and I am in opposition of bill number 1090. This bill would expand gambling in a state that already has too many opportunities for people to engage in this activity. I work at Advocacy Unlimited and I am very aware of what gambling addiction can do to people, families, communities and society. How many people are aware of the impact of gambling to people's lives?

We currently have 2 casinos and tons of mini casinos called convenience stores spread throughout CT. This is a powerful addiction and we need to provide education about this addiction. My concern is for the people that will get addicted to gambling because of the accessibility of these casinos. There is a lot of evidence to support that gambling is introduced into poor communities to attract people that can least afford it because of the promise of escape from poverty.

The new casinos that would be built and staffed promise more jobs to our state. That is one of the arguments here today. The jobs that will be created will not be careers but entry level jobs with no benefits or retirement.

We need to allocate funding to support treatment, education, advocacy and peer support. It is hard to sit here and oppose something that has so much support because of the idea of more jobs and the tax benefits and funds the state will get with these additional casinos. My concern is the human cost and how this addiction could and will hurt people in our state.

People lose their lives because of gambling. The human cost is too high if one more person takes their life in CT because of their gambling addiction.

As we move forward, can we make sure that we have more treatment, education, advocacy and peer support for gambling addiction. Advocacy that is not limited to speak based on their funding source but free to speak the truth about the dangers of this addiction. We need to continue bringing awareness to the state of CT about the impact that gambling addiction could and will have on people.