

Commerce Committee Public Hearing

HB 5577 An Act Requiring The Evaluation Of The Costs and Benefits Of Establishing Certain Commercial Gaming Within The State of Connecticut

March 10, 2016

Good afternoon Senators and Representatives, it is good to see you again. I met many of you last year outside the House and Senate chambers. My name is Rob Gallagher and I am a resident of Norwich, CT. I urge you not to support HB 5577 An Act Requiring The Evaluation of the Costs and Benefits of Establishing Certain Commercial Gaming Within The State of Connecticut. As you have heard today, there has been exhaustive studies on this topic and delaying this process any further only ensures that jobs will be lost. I urge you not to delay and work to protect the quality jobs in Connecticut's gaming industry.

It frustrates me when people criticize casino jobs, because I love my job. Working for Mohegan Sun has allowed me to have a great life, work with a great team and enjoy going to work every day. Just about this time, 20 years ago I applied for a job at Mohegan Sun. Although I applied for a job in Food and Beverage, HR offered me a spot to train to be a dealer. Today, I'm a dual-rate shift manager. I went from a job with no benefits in 1995 to owning a home, a rental property, a car and boat all registered and located in CT. I have a lot invested in this state.

I enjoy working at Mohegan Sun, not only do I receive a good salary, but I have outstanding health benefits as well as a generous vacation package. In addition, the tuition reimbursement program has helped be me pay for my United States Coast Guard Captain's classes.

I get frustrated when politicians and the public complain about gaming jobs without an understanding of what employees like myself and others do for our community. Not only do we pay taxes like so many others, we donate our time and money to charities and our communities. The casino industry develops very specific skills which are not easily transferable to other industries.

If I were to be laid off from Mohegan Sun because the State of Connecticut does not allow, or delays as HB 5577 would, the Mohegan and Mashantucket Tribes the ability to compete with out of state competition it wouldn't just be my job that left Connecticut I would be forced to leave as well. In order to find work that utilizes my skillset and offers comparable compensation I would be forced to look outside the Nutmeg state for another casino job. I would likely find myself a job in a state that recognizes the value the gaming industry brings to its community. A state which values not only the tax revenue but also the employees who are employed by the casinos. I hope it doesn't come to that and I hope that the legislators on this Committee and in the General Assembly recognize the value the gaming industry provides our state not only in taxes but the value employees like myself bring out or community. It is my hope that this General Assembly will do everything they can to protect our jobs, because if they don't it won't just be the jobs that leave Connecticut it will be the employees as well.

Thank you,

Rob Gallagher
Pit Manager, Table Games
Mohegan Sun