



**Connecticut Conference
United Church of Christ**

125 Sherman Street
Hartford, CT 06105-2281

Testimony in OPPOSITION to:

- **H.B. 7055: An Act Creating the Connecticut Gambling Commission and Creating A Competitive Bidding Process for a Resort Casino; and**
- **S.B. 11 An Act Concerning the Authorization of a Casino Gaming Facility in East Windsor; and**
- **S.B. 17 An Act Authorizing Sports Wagering, Internet Gambling and Internet Keno; and**
- **S.B. 665 An Act Concerning Sports Wagering.**

Submitted by Pamela Arifian

February 26, 2019

Dear Members of the Public Safety Committee:

I am Pamela Arifian, from 227 Low Road, Sharon CT, and member of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, which is leading the Coalition Against Casino Expansion in Connecticut (CACE).

Our Coalition against Casino Expansion in CT (CACE) is a group of 14 faith communities and organizations representing over a million people in Connecticut. Our Coalition spans a broad range of progressive and conservative viewpoints. We have joined together in a non partisan alliance to oppose the legalization of off reservation commercial casino gambling. We have come together to urge that no new casinos be built in our state. I am writing today in sin opposition to H.B. 7055: An Act Creating the Connecticut Gambling Commission and Creating A Competitive Bidding Process for a Resort Casino and I am also opposed to S.B. 11 An Act Concerning the Authorization of a Casino Gaming Facility in East Windsor. I am also opposed to S.B. 17 An Act Authorizing Sports Wagering, Internet Gambling and Internet Keno and lastly, I am opposed to S.B. 665 An Act Concerning Sports Wagering.

The social and economic costs of casinos and sports wagering would heavily outweigh the benefits. Casinos drain wealth fom communities, and prey upon problem gamblers, whose lives are often destroyed, along with those of their loved ones. Half of the money that casinos make comes from problem gamblers. This drain of wealth is linked with crime and bankruptcy, even suicide. Casinos make poor communities poorer, and is not good for local economic development.

According to a landmark report from the Institute for American Values, a non-partisan think tank, today's local and regional casinos drain wealth from communities, weaken nearby businesses, hurt property values, and reduce civic participation, family stability, and other forms of social capital.

Further, permitting the Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan Tribes to open an off-reservation casino could trigger a provision of the state-tribal compact under which the tribes would no longer have to pay the state 25% of their slot machine revenue. Allowing anyone other than the tribes to open a casino in Connecticut would automatically end tribal slot payments to the state. With the Northeast facing a growing casino glut, this is the worst possible time for Connecticut to up its bet on the casino industry. Casino winnings are flat or shrinking in many states, 5 of New Jersey's 12 casinos recently closed, and Connecticut's casino revenue and jobs are already down 40% from their peak. A 2016 study by the Nelson Rockefeller Institute of



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Government warns states that while new casinos may generate short-run increases in public revenues, those revenues can quickly reverse and decline.

New Jersey has had more experience with casinos than any state in the Northeast. On November 8, 2016 its residents voted 4-1 against a proposal to expand casino gambling beyond Atlantic City, reflecting the view that casinos have become an economic and social dead end for New Jersey. They have become a dead end for our state as well. Encouraging people to lose their money is not a solution for the economic challenges Connecticut faces.

Thank you for your time and for reading my testimony.

Sincerely,
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God is still speaking,

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