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To: Public Safety and Security Committee
Via PSTestimony@CGA.ct.gov

From: Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree

RE: Following Bills: HB7055, SB11, SB17, SB665

Dear Members of the Public Safety Committee:

I write as a retired clergyperson who served for eleven years in a parish in southeastern Connecticut, and then for fourteen years as the Conference Minister of the United Church of Christ in CT. The combination of those two experiences is what drives me to write to you today in opposition to the above bills.

When I left southeastern CT, the casinos were then under consideration. When I returned five years later to serve as the leader of our denomination, I was shocked by what I heard from the pastoral colleagues of my prior time in CT. They described to me a degradation of life for both their individual members and for their communities near the casinos. Incidence of alcohol and drug abuse, gambling addiction, domestic violence and divorce had gone way up. Traffic issues and accidents were curtailing community life. In some cases members of our churches had left other employment for the casinos and their quality of life took significant downturns. The jobs are not ones that improve life for most people; instead they degrade the jobholders and their families.

From my perspective, CT already has too many casinos, and far too much negative impact of gambling. I have lived in South Windsor and Windsor, and do not believe quality of life will be enhanced in that region of our state by the presence of casinos, nor will sports betting improve CT in any way. I know that as legislators you are looking for increased revenue flows. I want to say this clearly: trading quality of life and security of life for revenue is a trade off with heavy moral and ethical implications. We will gain nothing positive, and instead destroy the fabric of our life together as a state.

I urge you to vote **no** on every one of these bills. Thank you for your attention.