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TO: Co-chair Dennis Bradley
Co-chair Joe Verrengia
Ranking Member Tony Hwang
Ranking Member J. P. Sredzinski
Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee

RE: Testimony opposing SB 11, SB 17, SB 665, HB 7055

The expansion of State authorized gambling will not benefit Connecticut. Expanded casino and internet gambling will prove penny wise and pound foolish.

Government's first responsibility – expressed in the name of this committee – is the protection of public safety.

I remember the man painting my house some years ago. Every time the weather promised him a day off, he'd tell me that he was "going to pay the Indian." That's exactly what he said. I also know how long and hard he worked for the amount he charged.

One of my friends worked for years as a professional addiction counselor, employed to help people at Connecticut's casinos. From her I learned that the burden of gambling addiction falls most heavily on the children and families of the addicted. Their families are the people most hurt by gambling.

Frequently I hear people say that we must do this expansion of gambling to help the state balance its budget. Otherwise the revenue will go to other states. There is no question Connecticut faces a severe state budget problem. However, that problem is unlikely to be resolved by expanded gambling. Rather, existing revenue will be dispersed over an already saturated market. Any increase is likely to dissipate over the mid, or even the short, term. See the Rockefeller Institute report "State Revenues from Gambling"
https://rockinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/2016-04-12-Blinken_Report_Three-min.pdf

Promoting a business where by design the customer has no chance of receiving value for their money and time just cannot be justified. Trying to balance the state's budget on the backs of the children and relatives of the addicted makes no sense. Please protect our citizens and find some other, fairer way to balance the budget.

Sincerely,

Ralph Jones