

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 Grace O'Connor
February 25, 2019

Dear Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee,

My name is Grace O'Connor and I am a resident of West Hartford. I am a UConn student and I am currently working with the Coalition Against Casino Expansion (CACE). CACE is a group of 14 faith communities and organizations representing over a million people in Connecticut.

I am writing today in strong opposition to H.B. 7055: An Act Creating the Connecticut Gambling Commission and Creating a Competitive Bidding Process for a Resort Casino; S.B. 11 An Act Concerning the Authorization of a Casino Gaming Facility in East Windsor; S.B.17 An Act Authorizing Sports Wagering, Internet Gambling and Internet Keno; and S.B. 665 An Act Concerning Sports Wagering.

I am opposed to the expansion of gambling of any kind because of the detrimental impacts that gambling addiction creates for problem gamblers, their families, and their communities. With gambling as the current highest addiction-related suicide rate, this is a serious addiction and additional casinos and online opportunities to gamble would only increase access for problem gamblers. Vulnerable populations like immigrants, the elderly, people of color, and lower socioeconomic groups are at higher risk as well, meaning that casinos prey on these groups of people for 30-50% of their revenue. This is an unacceptable economic choice for our state. Furthermore, casinos suck away economic activity from the surrounding community which takes away business from local restaurants, shops, and entertainment venues. It also reduces property values in nearby neighborhoods.

We need to be making more responsible economic development decisions in Connecticut, ones that do not gain profit at the expense of individuals suffering from and at risk of gambling addiction, and ones that do not drive business away from the local economy. Revenue that comes from gambling or wagering of any kind is an unjust and exploitative means of making profit. I do not want to see any more of this in my state for the sake of the numerous social and economic costs to CT residents that would far outweigh the benefits of the limited revenue it would generate.

Thank you for your time and attention to my testimony.

Sincerely,

Grace O'Connor
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