Public Safety and Security Committee Public Hearing

February 26, 2019

Testimony of Kevin Wissell

on behalf of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 488 Regarding House Bill 7055, *AN ACT CREATING THE CONNECTICUT GAMING COMMISSION AND CREATING A COMPETITIVE BIDDING PROCESS FOR A RESORT-CASINO.*

Chairman Bradley, Chairman Verrengia, Vice Chair Osten, Vice Chair Paolillo, Ranking Member Sredzinski, Ranking Member Hwang and members of the Public Safety and Security Committee,

I am member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local Union 488. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of IBEW Local 488 in **strong support** of House Bill 7055, An Act creating the Connecticut Gaming Commission and creating a competitive bidding process for a resort-casino.

Competitive bidding for a resort-casino in the state will offer the best scenario for our state and the communities where it would be built. By establishing a Gaming Commission and creating a competitive bidding process, we can update our existing gaming laws and increase revenue to our state.

MGM Bridgeport's proposed plan is a terrific case in point. 7,000 jobs for the city and the region at no cost to taxpayers. Not less than $8 million annually to Bridgeport, benefits to neighboring communities and an investment of $12 million in workforce development. However, while MGM is leading the way in this legislative process, this bill will only offer MGM, and competitors, a path to an open bidding process for the best possible project.

The construction of a resort casino would create great middle-class opportunities for our current tradespeople and continue to allow apprenticeship programs to train our communities for the future, all with decent wages, healthcare, retirement benefits, pride, and dignity on and off the job.

As with all projects of this magnitude, to also have a labor neutrality agreement with organized labor will ensure top wages and benefits are paid, as well as safe and favorable conditions exist through the duration of construction. All this in turn will have a positive economic impact on the region. Through putting local men and women to work, their wages will be spent back in the communities that they live in, supporting local business and allowing those communities to thrive.

I would **strongly** urge the Committee to **pass House Bill 7055** and encourage the growth of Connecticut's share of the U.S. gaming market.

Thank you for your consideration.

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