



February 26, 2021

TO: Committee on Public Safety and Security

RE: HB 6451 An Act Concerning Gaming Agreements with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe and the Mohegan Tribe of Indians of Connecticut

Dear Committee members:

I am writing today on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut regarding HB 6451 An Act Concerning Gaming Agreements with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe and the Mohegan Tribe of Indians of Connecticut. The state should enact online gaming legislation and do so in a way that protects the unique relationship Connecticut has developed with the Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan Tribes.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought significant, painful, and discouraging changes for so many people and businesses throughout Connecticut, but the southeastern portion of the state was hit particularly hard. Many of our small service businesses were shuttered and our state's largest employers, our casinos, were forced to lay off thousands of employees. As we begin the 2021 legislative session, our legislators have the opportunity to stabilize and boost the economy by enacting legislation to legalize online gaming and sports betting.

Our region saw a significant drop in its gaming revenue during the lockdown this spring. Not only did that mean state revenue fell, it also created hardship for local businesses that provide goods and services to these institutions. States like Pennsylvania saw a much smaller dip, as their online gaming rocketed and was able to make up the difference. Legislation that modernizes gaming will enable our two casinos to continue partnering with local businesses so they can keep their doors open and employees can keep their jobs.

Our casinos operated by the Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan tribal nations have been excellent partners and extraordinarily generous with their support of our many nonprofit and tourism venues in the region and state. Legalizing online gaming and sports betting help our casinos continue this tradition of generous giving, all of which will help the region return to a degree of normalcy. Additionally, doing so will stabilize our nonprofits, grow our small businesses, and when it is safe, grow our tourism sector in eastern Connecticut. It is an opportunity our state simply cannot afford to pass on.

We must not let this moment pass without coming together to support these initiatives to open up markets for our gaming industry, and we must do so with respect to our long-standing

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS WHO CONTRIBUTE SIGNIFICANTLY TO PROGRAMS IN SUPPORT OF THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY.

Mohegan Sun	ConnectiCare	Equinor	The Simon Konover Company	Putnam Bank
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Pfizer	Charter Oak Federal Credit Union	Liberty Bank	Genesys Diagnostics Inc	Vineyard Wind
Foxwoods Resort Casino	Chelsea Groton Bank	Groton Utilities	Mystic Aquarium	Backus Hospital
CT Municipal Electric Energy Cooperative	Cross Sound Ferry	Comcast Business	General Dynamics Electric Boat	Lawrence + Memorial Hospital/Yale New Haven Health
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partnership with the Tribes and recognize integral role the casinos play for small businesses in the local economy.

Sincerely,



Tony Sheridan
President and CEO, Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut

Thank you to our supporters who contribute significantly to programs in support of the small business community.

ConnectiCare	Dime Bank	People's United Bank	The Day Publishing Company	Antonino Auto Group
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