



**Mashantucket Pequot
Tribal Nation**

**Public Safety Committee
Tuesday, March 2, 2021
Testimony Submitted by**

**Rodney Butler, Tribal Chairman
Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation**

S.B. No. 146 AAA SPORTS WAGERING, ONLINE CASINO GAMING, ONLINE LOTTERY AND ONLINE KENO.

H.B. No. 6451 AAC GAMING AGREEMENTS WITH THE MASHANTUCKET PEQUOT TRIBE AND THE MOHEGAN TRIBE OF INDIANS OF CONNECTICUT.

Kuweeqáhsun Neetôpawak (Good morning friends), Senator Bradley, Representative Horn, Senator Champagne, Representative Green, my name is Rodney Butler, Chairman of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation. I'd like to take a moment and thank all of you for your continued diligence in working to modernize Connecticut's gaming landscape. It has been a long process over several years and I want you to know that all your efforts are appreciated.

This Committee, more than any other, has a deep understanding and appreciation of the tribal/state relationship and its pertinence to Connecticut's overall gaming policy. Our compacts represent modern-day treaties and they are regarded by our nation with the same amount of reverence.

American history has not been kind in its treatment to Native American people. Nor has government always proven honorable in its commitment to the various agreements executed with indigenous populations. Assuring that history does not repeat itself is a fundamental responsibility of the office I hold as Chairman and the vantage point through which I'm obligated to view any new negotiations with the state.

Without betraying the confidence of our deliberations with the Administration, I'd say we are close to an agreement. Having said that, there are some significant remaining points of contention that need resolution. But a deal is well within reach if there is a true desire to bring it across the finish line.

It's my sincere hope that this is my last appearance before the Public Safety Committee related to sports betting and iGaming. As such, I'd like to take this opportunity to formally recognize the sponsors of S.B. 146 -- which we are here today to support -- and to express our sincere gratitude to them, and to the Southeastern legislative delegation in particular, for their unwavering support throughout the duration of this debate. We have been extremely fortunate to have had the backing of such a widespread group of bipartisan policymakers which is indicative of the fact that this issue is about much more than just gaming.

The success of our tribal enterprises is about the economic success of our region and it is an ongoing lesson in American history. This is but the latest chapter in our story. As we turn the page on the pandemic and work to fully restore our operations, passage of legislation like S.B. 146 will diversify our portfolio and drive additional foot traffic to Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun translating into more jobs and increased revenue to the state.

Just a few facts, I'd like to reiterate for benefit of the Committee record today.

- Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun contribute 25% of their gross slots revenue to the State of Connecticut.
- Out of 306 tribes, there are only 13 tribes at the 25% level and 284 tribes are at 15% or below.
- If presented to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) today, the 25% would be rejected as too generous in favor of the State.
- The State of Connecticut is largest financial beneficiary of Foxwoods. The state's revenue share is three times more than what the Tribe itself receives every year.
- Since inception, the Tribes' slot agreements have yielded the state over \$8 billion.
- Despite the pandemic, recent consensus revenue estimates project a yield to the state of \$232.3 million in FY 2021 and \$232.6 million in FY 2022.
- Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun are among the state's largest employers - somewhere squarely between Sikorsky and Aetna in terms of size, according to a 2017 report.
- Tens of thousands of Connecticut citizens have been employed by both tribal gaming operations over the decades.
- Thousands of Connecticut businesses have flourished as vendors to our enterprises.
- Millions of out-of-state visitors have travelled to Southeastern Connecticut to visit our facilities.
- Over \$6 billion of capital has been invested on our lands and supported by thousands of hard-working Connecticut trades men and women.
- Collectively our tribes generate over \$2 billion annually in economic impact for the state.

We are ready, willing, and able to implement sports betting and iGaming. Assuming the legislature acts quickly to implement the governing framework, Foxwoods, along with our partners at DraftKings, can be up and running in a matter of months -- as soon as BIA approval is granted.

We urge your full support of S.B. 146, and likewise, HB 6451 which also provides a path forward to modernize gaming.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment.