



March 1, 2021

Testimony for SB 146: AN ACT AUTHORIZING SPORTS WAGERING, ONLINE CASINO GAMING,
ONLINE LOTTERY AND ONLINE KENO.

Dear Co-Chair Rep. Horn, Co-Chair Senator Bradley, Vice-Chair Senator Osten, Vice-Chair Rep. Dathan,
Vice-Chair Rep. Paolillo, and esteemed members of the Public Safety and Security Committee,

I am submitting this testimony for SB 146 on behalf of the Arts Council of Greater New Haven, a nonprofit service organization that amplifies, empowers, and unites artists, creative organizations, and residents. Our region's creative ecosystem produces \$135 million in direct economic activity, supports 5,600 full-time equivalent jobs, and attracts 700,000 attendees annually ([source](#)). Artists and creative organizations have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, but are critical for restoring social connections, building cultural equity and racial justice, and supporting vibrant, healthy communities.

To be specific, the pandemic has devastated Connecticut's creative economy, losing an estimated \$2.4B in revenue with unemployment or underemployment reaching 60% ([source](#)). The federal government, private foundations, and donors have made critical investments to help our sector, but the economic crisis is far from over. The state must provide significant support now to avert dire consequences.

The Arts Council supports this bill with the modification that the Tourism Fund receives a portion of the gaming revenue. Right now, the bill states that 10% or \$20 million, whichever is less, is earmarked for the "state-wide tourism marketing account," which was created in 2006 in section 10-395a of the general statutes to invest in the state's tourism marketing campaigns. However, this statute was replaced with 10-395b in 2017 to create the Tourism Fund, which invests in the arts, culture, and tourism industries. It's likely that this was the intention of the bill, but clarification is needed for our full support.

Expanding gambling in Connecticut has many risks, but investing in the Tourism Fund at the same time would create widespread benefits in our communities, from fellowships for individual artists to grants for historic museums, strategic marketing campaigns to afterschool programs. Further, according to the [National Assembly of State Arts Agencies](#), six states already have allocated a portion of gambling revenue to arts and culture. Any bill that you consider to expand gambling would benefit from allocating some portion of the revenue to the Tourism Fund.

If this bill was adjusted to name the Tourism Fund specifically as a beneficiary, the Arts Council hopes you that this bill will also **specify that the additional revenue in this fund is invested in the statewide agencies** - CT Office of the Arts (Arts Commission), CT Office of Tourism (Statewide Marketing), and CT Humanities (Humanities Council) - rather than the individual direct line item earmarks for organizations. The pandemic has had a devastating and disproportionate impact on the arts, culture, and tourism industries and only these agencies have the reach to strategically provide resources where needed.

Thanks for your enduring support for the power of arts and culture and for considering this recommendation. I would be happy to answer any additional questions as your process continues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Fitzmaurice', written in a cursive style.

Daniel Fitzmaurice
Executive Director