



**PUBLIC SAFETY & SECURITY COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING
TUESDAY, MARCH 2, 2020**

**Testimony of Raymond P. Pineault,
COO Mohegan Gaming & Entertainment**

In Support of

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

Good afternoon respected members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. My name is Ray Pineault, and I'm the COO of Mohegan Gaming and Entertainment and former CEO of Mohegan Sun Connecticut. I am a UCONN graduate, a member of Mohegan Tribe, and a lifelong Connecticut resident. Joining me today is Rob Gallagher, a Pit Manager at Mohegan Sun. Additionally, David Rome and Avi Alroy are also here today to answer any questions you have. I'd like to offer our testimony on [Senate Bill 146 An Act Authorizing Sports Wagering, Online Casino Gambling, Online Lottery, and Online Keno](#). We greatly appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today.

To begin, on behalf of the Tribe and Mohegan Sun, I would like to first thank our incredible delegation from Southeastern Connecticut, whose support, hard work, and partnership is deeply valued by the Mohegan Tribe. We know they have our back, and we hope our words and our actions show that we're there for our neighboring communities as well.

In both his State of the State and his budget address Governor Lamont suggested that Connecticut should "not surrender these opportunities to out-of-state markets or even worse, underground markets." We very much agree with those remarks. Connecticut stands to generate significant annual revenue from sports wagering, online and sports gaming, and other changes, just as other states around us and across the country are actively doing.

We are here today to talk about online gaming and sports wagering. And we want to be clear, we have appreciated the opportunity to engage with the administration in recent



months on these topics. To that end, we can confirm that after careful review, the Mohegan Tribe is confident that the \$47.3 million allocated in the Governor's budget proposal on this front is very much achievable through an agreement with both tribal nations. If Connecticut wants to move forward on these areas this year, there's nothing stopping the state from doing so with its tribal partners. In order to restore and then grow local employment and local tax revenues, we should not miss the opportunity again to pass legislation that legalizes online and sports gaming, and we must do it in partnership with our tribes and elected officials.

Connecticut's tribal nations have been active and engaged partners to lawmakers. We will continue to engage with elected officials to ensure that the benefits from online and sports gaming are felt by both our tribal members and the rest of Connecticut.

As we continue to learn more about the opportunities that will follow legalizing online and sports gaming, we continue to ask you to remember and respect the underlying exclusivity of our tribal nations when it comes to gaming in our state. Both of our governments as well as the taxpayers of Connecticut are well-served by the existing agreements, and sports wagering can and should be implemented without putting those agreements in jeopardy. The best and most expedient path toward making changes like these a reality is by operating within -- not outside of -- the longstanding, exclusive nature of gaming in the State of Connecticut.

The Mohegan Tribe are long-time, steadfast partners to our neighboring communities, and to the entire state. Never has that importance of that relationship been more clear than over the past year as we have collectively managed this pandemic. As just the most recent example of our partnership, our Tribe is honored to now host the Southeastern Connecticut hub for Connecticut vaccination efforts. Within its first day of opening, the new clinic is already serving up to 300 residents each day. We want to do our part to ensure that as many state residents are vaccinated as soon as possible. This latest work comes on the heels of a similar joint effort to host large-scale Covid testing on tribal land over the past three months.

In addition to our efforts to protect local residents during the pandemic, we continue to employ thousands of state residents, serving as a key driver of our regional economy, and a major contributor to not only the state budget, but also to local city and town budgets across Connecticut.



Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, at Mohegan Sun full time employment is currently down more than 21 percent, representing more than 1,000 full and part time jobs and millions in wages. This lost economic activity has a compounding effect across the region and especially on the many local businesses we rely on. By passing legislation that would bring online and sports gaming to our state, we would be creating new jobs and maintaining careers for thousands of Connecticut residents.

In closing, we want to state this: recovering from this pandemic means we can no longer sit on the sidelines and allow our neighboring states to take action to the benefit of their state budgets and state economies. We continue to offer our support for the concepts explored, along with our commitment to negotiation and cooperation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.