

Public Safety and Security Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6512

AN ACT CONCERNING CONSUMER PROTECTIONS FOR SPORTS

Title: WAGERING.

Vote Date: 3/24/2021

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/2/2021

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Public Safety and Security Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill will provide consumer protections when participating in an electronic wagering platform. With the expansion of online wagering, consumer protections would be necessary to have it done safely.

Substitute Language

There are changes made to the provisions regarding placing sports wagers and obligations of a sports wagering operator. A new section was added regarding a consultant to study and make recommendations on the operations of the Connecticut Lottery Corp.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Robert T. Simmelkjaer II, Chairperson, Board of Directors, Gregory Smith, President & CEO, CT Lottery

Mr. Simmelkjaer is in support of this bill with changes. CT Lottery understands that with every product sold, we must offer online lottery and/or sports betting responsibly and with appropriate controls for gambling. We support responsible gambling and have a variety of safeguards in place. CT Lottery would like to bring to attention language in the bill that needs further review.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Paul Formica, Senator, State of Connecticut

Sen. Formica is in support of this bill. This bill or some compromise would enable a new source of revenue to the state. The bill continues to be built on a bipartisan partnership the state has with the tribes. He urges support for this bill.

John Armstrong, Member, Coalition against Gambling Expansion in Connecticut**

Mr. Armstrong is in support of this bill. In a perfect world he would argue against gambling in Connecticut. We do live in a perfect world and he recognizes that Connecticut must act in its own best interest. The neighboring states are moving towards online gambling and economics argue, regrettably, Connecticut must join the parade. Connecticut should be a leader not a follower in establishing a safe, enjoyable environment for online gambling. There should be some changes to the bill to strengthen its consumer protections. Mr. Armstrong discusses those in this testimony.

Neil Eskin, Senior Associate Athletic Director, University of Connecticut**

Mr. Eskin is in support of this bill. Mr. Eskin is **not** in support of collegiate sports betting. Intercollegiate athletic competitions are conceivably the easiest to influence given the vulnerability of 18 to 22-year-old student athletes. Student athletes are not like professional athletes that are highly compensated and are vulnerable to attempts by individuals to influence the outcomes. UConn looks forward to collaborating on any sports betting bills as the legislative process continues to ensure that the potential financial benefits associated with state-sponsored sports betting are not overshadowed by unintended negative consequences.

Diana Goode, Executive Director, Connecticut Council on Problem Gambling**

Ms. Goode is in support of this bill. There are many positive factors that go into the expansion of gaming and there are benefits to the state, however gambling impacts over 100,000 citizens and over 275,000 family members are impacted by problem gambling. Any expansion in gambling will see those numbers rise. Ms. Goode requests the following be considered as part of the larger Problem Gambling Safety Net: Funds should be dedicated to prevent and treat gambling addiction, 10% of funds be deposited into Chronic Gamblers Treatment and Rehabilitation Account, Require all betting operators to implement responsible gaming programs and Assign a regulatory agency to enforce the regulations and requirements that are enacted.

Yoga Kammili, Jonathan Harrell II, Jacob Luecke, UConn Medical Students**

The above UConn medical students are in support of this bill. Though they recognize the benefits of expanding gaming in Connecticut. It is important to recognize the impact it could have on future generations and how we can safely integrate and educate a healthy understanding of gaming for them.

**understand the benefits but have concerns and have recommendations.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

NONE EXPRESSED

Reported by: Bonnie Gray, Asst. Clerk

Date: 4/2/2021