



Testimony of
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In Opposition to
Raised S.B. 1464

*AN ACT CONCERNING SPORTS WAGERING
AND MULTIJURISDICTIONAL INTERNET GAMES*

General Law Committee
Public Hearing Room 2C
March 7, 2025

The Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference, the public policy office of the Roman Catholic Bishops of Connecticut, urges the members of the General Law Committee to oppose S.B. 1464, *AN ACT CONCERNING SPORTS WAGERING AND MULTIJURISDICTIONAL INTERNET GAMES* which expands gambling options in Connecticut to include out-of-state platforms. This legislation will only help to feed the increase in gambling addiction across our state, which will lead to more destroyed lives and families.

Over the last decade the General Assembly has continually approved an increase in gambling options within our state to raise funds for balancing the budget and expanding services. The latest expansion in gambling options that was enacted in 2021 has brought in \$244 million in state coffers.¹ The downside to this number, based on a study by the State Department of Mental Health and Addiction, is that half of these funds came from problem gamblers.²

Despite the public harm legalized gambling has caused, the General Assembly is considering yet another further expansion of gambling which will produce even more broken individuals and families. Aware that the expansion of gambling causes significant harm, the General Assembly displays a disingenuous concern by providing money for addiction services. Unfortunately, these services occur after the individuals or families have suffered. The best way to stop the harm gambling can cause is to stop its expansion and constant promotion in print and electronic media.

The Catholic Church believes that “games of chance (card games, etc.) or wagers are not in themselves contrary to justice. They become morally unacceptable when they deprive someone of what is necessary to provide for his needs and the needs of others.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2413*).

Gambling as such is not immoral. However, when individuals are drawn into gambling in an excessive or even compulsive way that compromises or even ruins their ability to provide for themselves or the needs of others, then gambling becomes morally objectionable. The serious negative impact of gambling in Connecticut is well documented, despite the good-intentioned efforts to address problem gamblers.

¹CTInsider, Jan. 29, 2025 <https://www.ctinsider.com/connecticut/article/ct-sports-online-gambling-by-the-numbers-20033296.php>.

² <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DMHAS/Publications/2023-CT-FINAL-REPORT-Jan312024.pdf>

Although the use of gambling revenue has allowed the state to address many social needs in our state, we all must remember the common phrase “the end does not justify the means.” In other words, addressing important social needs does not justify the increasing of a harmful addiction. The same can be said of the legalization of cannabis in our state. The General Assembly should reevaluate its approach of legalizing revenue sources that have a growing detrimental effect on our society.

Considering the studies that have been done, and the negative consequences that can result, the Conference opposes any further expansion of gambling in our state. Again, the best way to serve the common good of the people of Connecticut is to stop its expansion and its constant promotion in the print and electronic media.