



**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2025**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. NO. 1308, H.D. 3, S.D. 1, RELATING TO SPORTS WAGERING.

BEFORE THE:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

DATE: Wednesday, April 2, 2025

TIME: 10:01 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 211

TESTIFIER(S): **WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY.**

(For more information, contact David L. Williams,
Deputy Attorney General, at 586-1170)

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General (Department) opposes this bill.

This bill legalizes and regulates sports wagering by adding a new chapter to the Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) that allows for the regulation of sports wagering by the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism. It establishes licensing requirements for sports wagering operators and sports wagering suppliers. It excludes sports wagering and fantasy sports from current gambling laws by providing that sports wagering and fantasy sports contests shall not be considered games of chance or gambling. It levies a tax on the adjusted gross sports wagering receipts.

The Department opposes this bill because it may lead to the well-studied public health and safety issues that come with legalized gambling. This bill allows for licensed and regulated sports wagering gambling operations, but provides only limited regulation and minimal punishment for those who engage in unlicensed sports wagering activity. The only prohibition is for conducting unlicensed sports wagering by operators and suppliers who are required to have licenses. Anyone else could participate in unlicensed sports wagering activity without consequences. The bill also allows for completely unregulated and unlicensed gambling in the fantasy sports context.

Studies have shown that legalized online sports betting results in adverse societal impacts, high costs to address those adverse impacts, and increased crime.

For example, a study issued in June 2024 compared changes in household spending between states that prohibit online sports betting and states that legalized online sports betting between 2018 and 2023. Based on the data, "[t]he legalization of [online] sports betting . . . increases credit card balances, reduces available credit . . . and decreases net investments in financial markets. These effects are particularly pronounced among financially constrained households."¹ Rather than redirecting household spending from other forms of entertainment—which would be a neutral or even positive use of funds—people overwhelmingly redirected funds that used to be spent on more stable, long-term investments, like retirement accounts.²

Consistent with these findings, a separate study issued in July 2024 analyzed credit bureau data to assess the effects of legalized sports betting on credit scores, debt, bankruptcy, and delinquency, and found a "substantial increase in bankruptcy rates, debt sent to collections, use of debt consolidation loans, and auto loan delinquencies . . . noting that these results are substantially stronger for states that allow online sports gambling"³ Specifically, data showed that "online access significantly increases the likelihood of bankruptcy filing . . . by as much as 25-30% when compared to pre-treatment [i.e., before legalization] levels."⁴ Percentage-wise, these impacts of online sports betting were generally consistent among all ages, genders, and income levels, with young men (i.e., below age forty-five) from low-income areas being slightly more impacted by "higher rates of bankruptcy, more usage of consolidation and secured loans, more credit card delinquencies . . . [and] credit card limits decrease[d] the most."⁵

¹ R. Baker, Scott and Balthrop, Justin and Johnson, Mark J. and Kotter, Jason D. and Pisciotta, Kevin, "Gambling Away Stability: Sports Betting's Impact on Vulnerable Households" (June 30, 2024), at p.30. Available online at: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4881086. Last accessed March 6, 2025.

² Walsh, Dylan. "Online Sports Betting Is Draining Household Savings" (December 1, 2024). Available online at <https://insight.kellogg.northwestern.edu/article/online-sports-betting-is-draining-household-savings#!>. Last accessed March 6, 2025.

³ Hollenbeck, Brett and Larsen, Poet and Proserpio, Davide, "The Financial Consequences of Legalized Sports Gambling" (July 23, 2024). Available online at: https://bretthollenbeck.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/hollenbeck_sports_gambling.pdf. Last accessed March 6, 2025.

⁴ *Id.*, at 18.

⁵ *Id.*, pp. 23-26.

In addition to the direct impacts of online sports betting on household finances, multiple studies have shown a correlation between problem gambling and domestic violence, with approximately 38.1 percent of problem gamblers reportedly being victims of intimate partner violence, and 36.5 percent reportedly being perpetrators of intimate partner violence.⁶ A study issued in August 2024 found that "legalizing sports gambling increases the effect of upset loss [i.e., an unexpected loss by a favored team] on IPV [i.e., incidents of intimate partner violence] by 4.1 to 6.31 percentage points" and overall, "when sports betting is legal, IPV increase by 8.5 to 9.6%."⁷

There is also a concern about youth and legalized gambling. For instance, one study notes that children who see parents, siblings, and other members of their household gamble are more likely to engage in gambling and other risky behaviors themselves.⁸ And yet another study finds that the earlier children are exposed to gambling, the more severe their gambling problems are likely to be later on.⁹

Hawaii's gambling laws currently provide an exception for "social gambling" (see section 712-1231, HRS), that allows, for example, a typical "poker night" or Super Bowl "betting pool" at a friend or family member's home. If conducted in this manner, "sports wagering" can already be enjoyed legally by Hawaii residents and the Department has no concerns about such activity. The Department is concerned, however, that once legalized gambling starts to involve large-scale operations, business corporations, or other money-making enterprises, the known risks and societal costs associated with

⁶ Dowling N, Suomi A, Jackson A, Lavis T, Patford J, Cockman S, Thomas S, Bellringer M, Koziol-Mclain J, Battersby M, Harvey P, Abbott M. "Problem Gambling and Intimate Partner Violence: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis." *Trauma Violence Abuse*. Available online at: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25477014/>. Last accessed March 6, 2025.

⁷ Matsuzawa, Kyutaro and Arnesen, Emily, "Sports Betting Legalization Amplifies Emotional Cues & Intimate Partner Violence" (August 27, 2024), p. 13. Available online at: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4938642. Last accessed March 6, 2025.

⁸ Nower, Lia, "The Intergenerational Transmission of Gambling and Other Addictive Behaviors: Implications of the Mediating Effects of Cross-Addiction Frequency and Problems." Available online at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S030646032200226X?via%3Dihub>. Last accessed March 6, 2025.

⁹ Rahman, Ardesheer R., "The Relationship Between Age of Gambling Onset and Adolescent Problematic Gambling Severity." Available online at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0022395612000623?via%3Dihub>. Last accessed March 6, 2025.

legalized gambling will become real problems for the people of Hawaii on a much larger scale."

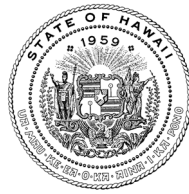
Additionally, the Department is concerned that the new chapter set forth in section 1 of this bill on page 1, line 1, to page 28, line 21, proposes fairly extensive specifications regarding the licensing and regulation of sports wagering, but nowhere in section 1 is "fantasy sports" included in the licensing and regulation provisions similar to sports wagering. Moreover, while "fantasy sports contest" is defined on page 2, line 14, to page 3, line 12, the proposed definition of "sports wagering" (on page 4, line 20, to page 5, line 8), explicitly notes (on page 5, lines 7-8) that "sports wagering" does not include "fantasy sports **contests**." Also, in section 1, page 27, line 19, to page 28, line 17, a new penalty section is proposed for unlicensed sports wagering, with no mention of unlicensed "fantasy sports contests."

Moreover, section 2, beginning at page 29, line 1, proposes to amend section 237-13, HRS, Imposition of tax, by adding a tax on sports wagering in new paragraph (9) at page 45, lines 12-20, where again, there is no mention of "fantasy sports contests."

And finally, section 3 proposes to amend section 712-1220, HRS, by amending the definition of "Contest of chance" to exclude sports wagering and "fantasy sports contests" (page 46, line 21, to page 47, line 3) and by amending the definition of "Gambling" to exclude sports wagering and "fantasy sports contests" (page 47, line 10, to page 48, line 4).

The Department is concerned that by removing fantasy sports contests from the definition of "gambling" (section 3, page 48, line 4), the bill decriminalizes fantasy sports contest activity altogether, in essence carving out an activity that can be done with no licensing, no regulation, and no taxing. Disconcertingly, there is also no penalty section provided similar to that proposed for unlicensed sports wagering (section 1, page 27, line 19, to page 28, line 17) for unlicensed fantasy sports contests, leaving fantasy sports contests open to not only unlicensed and unregulated activity, but also providing no penalty provisions for unlicensed and unregulated fantasy sports contest activity.

For the foregoing reasons, the Department respectfully opposes this bill and requests that it be deferred.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR

SABRINA NASIR
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
Ka 'Oihana Mālama Mo'ohelu a Kālā
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ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
ON
HOUSE BILL NO. 1308, H.D. 3, S.D. 1

April 2, 2025
10:01 a.m.
Room 211 and Videoconference

RELATING TO SPORTS WAGERING

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

House Bill (H.B.) No. 1308, H.D. 3, S.D. 1, adds a new chapter to the HRS to:

1) allow for lawful sports wagering under regulation of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT); 2) require DBEDT to issue licenses to sports wagering operators and suppliers; 3) require DBEDT to establish a voluntary exclusion program; 4) establish the Problem Gambling Prevention and Treatment Special Fund (PGPTSF), which is to be administered by the Department of Health for the purposes of treating and supporting gambling disorders and receive an unspecified percentage of sports wagering taxes collected from licensed sports wagering operators; and 5) provide that an unspecified percentage of sports wagering taxes collected from license sports wagering operators shall be used for programs that support education in the State. The bill also amends Section 237-13, HRS, to establish an unspecified percentage tax on gross sports wagering receipts for both licensed operators and suppliers; amends Section 712-1220, HRS, to exclude sports wagering and fantasy sports contests from the

definitions of “contest of chance” and “gambling” as pertaining to gambling offenses; and amends Section 846-2.7, HRS, to authorize DBEDT to conduct criminal history record checks for applicants and licensees of sports wagering operator and supplier licenses.

As a matter of general policy, B&F does not support the creation of any special fund, which does not meet the requirements of Section 37-52.3, HRS. Special funds should: 1) serve a need as demonstrated by the purpose, scope of work, and an explanation why the program cannot be implemented successfully under the general fund appropriation process; 2) reflect a clear nexus between the benefits sought and charges made upon the users or beneficiaries or a clear link between the program and the sources of revenue; 3) provide an appropriate means of financing for the program or activity; and 4) demonstrate the capacity to be financially self-sustaining. Regarding H.B. No. 1308, H.D. 3, S.D. 1, it is difficult to determine whether the proposed PGPTSF would be self-sustaining.

B&F defers to the Department of Taxation on the tax revenue projections of this bill and notes other State “sin” taxes are designed to generate sufficient general fund revenue to offset the State’s overall administrative costs to regulate harmful products and services. For reference, cigarette and liquor tax collections were respectively \$84,200,000 and \$51,600,000 for FY 24. Therefore, B&F recommends that the proposed sports wagering tax be set at a parity to, if not higher than, other “sin” taxes, with the portion of revenues deposited to the general fund at a sufficient level needed to support the intents of this bill in a self-sustaining manner. As currently written, it is unclear if the current proposed tax rate would generate sufficient revenues to regulate the sports wagering industry in Hawai‘i.

Finally, B&F notes this bill does not appropriate any expenditure ceiling for the proposed PGPTSF.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

JOSH GREEN M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION

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GARY S. SUGANUMA
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KRISTEN M.R. SAKAMOTO
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

TESTIMONY OF
GARY S. SUGANUMA, DIRECTOR OF TAXATION

TESTIMONY ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. No. 1308, H.D. 3, S.D.1, Relating to Sports Wagering.

BEFORE THE:

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

DATE: Thursday, April 2, 2025
TIME: 10:01 a.m.
LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 211

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chairs Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Taxation (DOTAX) offers the following comments regarding H.B. 1308, H.D. 3, S.D.1, for your consideration.

H.B. 1308, H.D. 3, S.D.1, establishes a regulatory framework for sports wagering, along with licensing requirements for sports wagering operators and sports wagering suppliers.

In Section 1 of the bill, beginning on page 25, line 14, the general excise tax (GET) proposed under section 237-13(9), Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), is imposed on persons holding a license to engage in sports wagering as a sports wagering operator. This tax is imposed in lieu of all other taxes on the operation or proceeds of sports wagering in the state. An unspecified percent of these taxes collected are to be deposited into the "Problem Gambling Prevention and Treatment Special Fund" established under § -12 of the bill and programs that support education in the State.

Section 2 of the bill amends section 237-13, HRS, to impose the GET on licensed sports wagering at an unspecified percent of the adjusted gross sports wagering receipts (AGSWR). AGSWR is defined in section 1 of the bill (page 1, lines 8 to 12) as "gross

sports wagering receipts less the total of all sums actually paid out as winnings to patrons, including the monetary value of any merchandise or thing of value awarded as a prize and subject to federal income tax.”

Section 3 of the bill amends the definition of “gambling” in section 712-1220, HRS, to exempt sports wagering authorized under the proposed HRS chapter in section 1 of the bill. This removes these activities from constituting gambling offenses under HRS 712, Part III.

This measure has a defective effective date of July 1, 3000.

DOTAX notes that the new section ____-11, HRS, on page 25 of the bill, provides that the tax on sports wagering revenues will be enforced by the “department,” which is defined in the new section ____-1, HRS, on page 2 of the bill as the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT). DOTAX recommends that the new section ____-11, HRS, be amended to clarify that enforcement of the GET imposed on sports wagering will be administered by DOTAX.

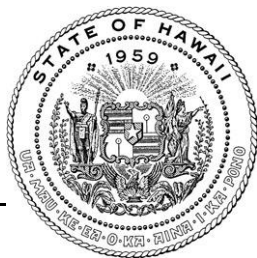
DOTAX further notes that the provisions on page 26, lines 4 to 8 and 15 to 17, which allocate a percentage of GET revenue from the sports wagering operator into the problem gambling prevention and treatment special fund and programs that support education in the State, would require a fundamental change in the way that DOTAX accounts for and reports on GET revenues. This bill would create administrative difficulties, as DOTAX will need to reconcile the amounts reported from adjusted gross sports wagering receipts with the amounts collected. Discrepancies will arise because the amount of tax collected often does not match the amount of tax reported for various reasons, including errors in payment or reporting or intentional underpayment. Additionally, many taxpayers report multiple categories of business activities on a single GET return.

DOTAX therefore requests that the allocation of revenue to the special fund be replaced with an appropriation of a set dollar amount. In the alternative, if the Committee intends to maintain the allocations of tax revenues from sports wagering into the special fund, DOTAX suggests that a separate tax be established on sports wagering by adding a new chapter to title 14, HRS. A separate tax would be less administratively burdensome to separately account for gaming revenues and would avoid potential issues with processing and administering the GET.

Additionally, DOTAX recommends that the new section 237-13(9), HRS, on page 45, lines 12 to 20, be amended to clarify how the GET will be imposed on amounts received by sports wagering suppliers. Although section 237-13(9), HRS, states that the GET is imposed on a “licensed sports wagering operator or sports wagering supplier,” section 237-13(9) appears to limit the assessment to “adjusted gross sports wagering receipts.” A sports wagering supplier, however, would not be authorized to accept wagers (see page 4, lines 1 to 4), and would therefore not have adjusted gross sports wagering receipts.

If passed, DOTAX requests the effective date be amended to January 1, 2027, to allow sufficient time to make the necessary system, forms, and instruction changes.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI
A HO'OMĀKA'IKAI

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Statement of
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Wednesday, April 2, 2025
10:01 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

In consideration of
HB1308, HD3, SD1
RELATING TO SPORTS WAGERING.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and members of the Committee.

The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) respectfully offers **comments** on HB1308, HD3, SD1, which allows for the regulation of sports wagering by DBEDT, establishes licensing requirements for sports wagering operators and suppliers, establishes a general excise tax to be levied on sports wagering operator licenses as well as the Problem Gambling Prevention and Treatment Fund, specifies that legal sports wagering and fantasy sports contents shall not be considered contests of chance or gambling, and authorizes DBEDT to perform criminal history record checks on applicants and licensees relating to sports wagering.

Most of the states with online sports wagering operations on the continental U.S. have independent agencies due to legal and law enforcement requirements and expertise. DBEDT is not a regulatory agency, however, if it is determined that the department is the regulatory entity then funding sources and the organization structure will need to be specified.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

DEPARTMENT OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO HO'OPI'I
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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FIRST DEPUTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
HOPE MUA LOIO HO'OPI'I

THE HONORABLE DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawai'i

April 2, 2025

RE: H.B. 1308, H.D.3, S.D. 1; RELATING TO SPORTS WAGERING.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu ("Department") submits the following testimony in **strong opposition** of H.B. 1308 H.D. 3, S.D. 1.

The purpose of H.B. 1308, H.D. 3, S.D. 1 is to legalize sports wagering and have it regulated under the oversight of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs. It establishes a ten percent tax on the adjusted gross sports wagering receipts. Given the serious public safety and wellness issues that inevitably accompany legalized gambling, the Department is strongly opposed to any legislative changes—such as this one—that would open the door to legalizing gambling in Hawai'i.

Currently, Hawai'i's gambling laws include a substantial exception for "social gambling" (see Section 712-1231, Hawaii Revised Statutes), which allow, for example, a typical "poker night" or Super Bowl "betting pool" at the home of a friend or family member. If conducted in this manner, "sports wagering" can already be enjoyed legally by Hawaii residents, and the Department has no problems with such activity. Once gambling starts to involve large-scale operations, business corporations or other money-making entities, however, the Department is extremely concerned about the known risks and societal costs associated with legalized gambling. Our laws currently list "gambling" within the definitions of "organized crime" and "racketeering" for good reason.

In a study conducted by Brett Hollenbeck, Poet Larsen, and Davide Proserpio¹, researchers examined the effects that legalized sports gambling had on communities after laws

¹ The Financial Consequences of Legalized Sports Gambling; July 2024; https://bretthollenbeck.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/hollenbeck_sports_gambling.pdf

were enacted to allow sports wagering. This study found that "...the ease of access to sports gambling is harming consumer financial health by increasing their level of debt." This study found that there was a 25-30% increase in likelihood of bankruptcy filings. The ease of access that H.B.1308 H.D. 1 offers will contribute to an exacerbation of gambling-related financial harm because citizens will be able to place bets "anytime and anywhere". This is in addition to an increase in auto loan delinquency, credit card delinquency, and collections. This is not a policy we want to promote when Hawai'i citizens already live in a place that has one of the highest cost of living.

A recent study conducted by the Rady School of Management found that "...legalization leads to more irresponsible gambling spending among lower-income consumers than among higher-income gamblers."² This study also found that,

"Of the more than 700,000 gamblers that we studied, 96% percent appeared to lose money to online gambling," Wilbur said. "Only 4% made money from online betting. That is by design. Online gambling platforms often ban or throttle frequent winners' accounts. There is no right to gamble."³

In addition to financial issues, legalized sports wagering increases intimate partner violence ("IPV"). Kyutaro Matsuzawa and Emily Arnesen found that "... when sports gambling is legalized, the effect of NFL home team upset losses on IPV increases by around 10 percentage points."⁴ Additionally, their study found that the effect is larger in states where there is mobile betting.

With so many issues facing our state, such as lack of affordable housing, homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction, we should be focused on addressing these real issues that impact our residents instead of bringing in legalized sports wagering and gambling that will exacerbate the problems already facing our community. Is the increase in tax revenue worth the negative impact on the lives of Hawai'i residents?

For all of the foregoing reasons, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu **strongly opposes** the passage of H.B. 1308, H.D. 3, S.D. 1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

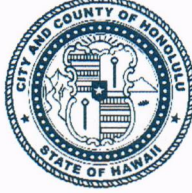
² Legalized Gambling Increases Irresponsible Betting Behavior, Especially Among Low-Income Populations; UC San Diego Today; July 23, 2024; <https://today.ucsd.edu/story/legalized-gambling-increases-irresponsible-betting-behavior-especially-among-low-income-populations>

³ See above.

⁴ Sports Betting Legalization Amplifies Emotional Cues & Intimate Partner Violence; Kyutaro Matsuzawa and Emily Arnesen; August 2024; https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4938642

HONOLULU POLICE DEPARTMENT
KA 'OIHANA MĀKA'I O HONOLULU
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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DEPUTY CHIEFS
HOPE LUNA NUI MĀKA'I

OUR REFERENCE RI-HR

April 2, 2025

The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
and Members
Committee on Ways and Means
State Senate
415 South Beretania Street, Room 211
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Dela Cruz and Members:

SUBJECT: House Bill No. 1308, H.D. 3, S.D. 1, Relating to Sports Wagering

I am Raynor M. Ikehara Major of the Narcotics/Vice Division of the Honolulu Police Department (HPD), City and County of Honolulu.

The HPD opposes House Bill No. 1308, H.D. 3, S.D. 1, Relating to Sports Wagering.


The HPD opposes legislation that aims to legalize sports wagering by not considering it gambling. Numerous studies have confirmed that gambling, including sports wagering, causes problems such as bankruptcy, theft, embezzlement, suicide, child abuse and neglect, divorce, incarceration, and homelessness. Studies have also demonstrated that gambling schemes are essentially regressive taxes on low-income people, those who can least afford to participate. The financial burden associated with these problems will far outweigh any benefit realized in the name of community betterment.

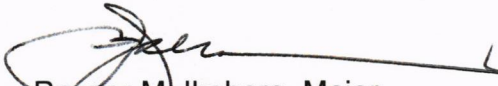
The HPD urges you to oppose House Bill No. 1308, H.D. 3, S.D. 1, Relating to Sports Wagering.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

APPROVED:

Sincerely,


Arthur J. Logan
Chief of Police


Raynor M. Ikehara, Major
Narcotics/Vice Division

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 10:43:30 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Country Talk Story	Testifying for CountryTalkStory	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

OPPOSE

TAX FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

735 Bishop Street, Suite 417

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Tel. 536-4587

SUBJECT: MISCELLANEOUS, GENERAL EXCISE; Sports Wagering and Gambling, Problem Gambling Prevention and Treatment Special Fund

BILL NUMBER: HB 1308 HD 3 SD 1

INTRODUCED BY: Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism and Commerce and Consumer Protection

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Allows for the regulation of sports wagering by the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism. Establishes licensing requirements for sports wagering operators and sports wagering suppliers. Establishes a general excise tax to be levied on sports wagering operator licenses. Establishes the Problem Gambling Prevention and Treatment Special Fund to be administered and expended by the Department of Health. Specifies that legal sports wagering and fantasy sports contests shall not be considered contests of chance or gambling. Authorizes DBEDT to perform criminal history record checks on applicants and licensees relating to sports wagering.

SYNOPSIS: Adds a new HRS chapter for the Regulation of Sports Wagering by the Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism. The measure establishes licensing requirements for sports wagering operators and sports wagering suppliers.

New section -1, HRS, includes definitions for:

“Adjusted gross sports wagering receipts” as gross sports wagering receipts less the total of all sums actually paid out as winnings to patrons, including the monetary value of any merchandise or thing of value awarded as a prize and subject to federal income tax.

“Gross sports wagering receipts” means the total of all cash paid by patrons as wagers.

“License” means licenses issued under this chapter by the department to:

- (1) A sports wagering operator to permit operating sports wagering through an approved mobile application or digital platform; and
- (2) A sports wagering supplier to sell or lease equipment, systems, or services to be used in connection with sports wagering but not to directly accept wagers.

New section ___-11, HRS, imposes the general excise tax in section 237-13, HRS, for the privilege of holding a license to engage in sports wagering as a sports wagering operator. The tax shall be in lieu of all other taxes imposed on the operation of sports wagering or on the proceeds from the operation of sports wagering.

Specifies the accrual method of accounting shall be used to calculate the tax owed.

The Department shall adopt rules and develop any forms necessary to carry out enforcement.

_____% of the taxes collected shall be deposited into the Problem Gambling Prevention & Treatment Special Fund established under section 12 of this section and ____% shall be used for programs that support education in the State.

New section ____-12, HRS, establishes the Problem Gambling Prevention & Treatment Special Fund (“Fund”) to be administered by the Department of Health. Legislative appropriations and taxes collected under section ____-11, will be deposited to the Fund.

The Fund shall be expended for: 1) counseling and other support services for disoriented and problem gamers; 2) developing and implementing problem gaming treatment and prevention programs; and 3) creating and disseminating responsible gaming education and messages.

Amends section 237-13(9), HRS, to add a tax on every person engaged in sports wagering as a licensed sports wagering operator or sports wagering supplier pursuant to new chapter ____.

The tax is equal to ____% of the “adjusted gross sports wagering receipts” as defined in new section ____-1. This tax shall be in lieu of all other taxes imposed on the operation of sports wagering or on the proceeds from the operation of sports wagering in the State.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 3000.

STAFF COMMENTS: Our comments are limited to the tax sections of this measure.

Imposition of the general excise tax

We have technical comments.

Section 237-13(9) imposes the general excise tax (GET) of an unspecified percentage on sports wagering operators **or** sports wagering suppliers licensed pursuant to chapter _____. However, Section ____-11 imposes the chapter 237, HRS, GET on only sports wagering **operators** and not on sports wagering **suppliers**. This inconsistency may lead to arguments that sports wagering suppliers are exempt from GET.

Section 237-13(9) as amended imposes an unspecified amount of tax on the “adjusted gross sports wagering receipts” defined in section ____-1 as gross sports wagering receipts less the total of all sums actually paid out as winnings to patrons. This creates an anomaly for sports wagering **suppliers**, which are not supposed to have any sports wagering receipts. It may be better to remove sports wagering suppliers from the new section 237-13(9). The other paragraphs in that section should pick up a supplier’s income from doing business.

Section ____-11 requires use of the accrual method of accounting to determine the tax owed. This may create administrative difficulties. At present, the GET is calculated on whatever method is used on the taxpayer’s net income tax returns (except that contractors may elect to use the cash method even though their income tax returns use the accrual method). Any audit of a cash method taxpayer’s returns will require conversion of the taxpayer’s income to accrual method.

Section ____-11 indicates the tax imposed is in lieu of all other taxes imposed on the operation of sports wagering. That would seem to mean sports wagering is exempt from net income taxes and payroll withholding. Is that really what is meant?

Section ____-11 states that the “department” is tasked with adopting rules and forms for this tax. However, section ____-1 of the bill defines “department” as DBEDT. Better to use “department of taxation” in this section.

Problem Gambling Prevention & Treatment Special Fund

This bill establishes a special fund administered by the Department of Health to address problem gambling prevention and treatment that is anticipated to be required as a result of this measure’s licensing of sports wagering.

Special funds are pots of money that exist for a specific purpose and largely bypass the legislative appropriation process. The existence of hundreds of these special funds has often confounded those who seek answers to simple questions like “How much money does the State have?”

Our Legislature is supposed to be the steward of all state moneys, but special funds make it very easy to lose track of where the money is and how it is being spent. Departments are supposed to tell the Legislature if they have special funds and how much is in them, but let’s just say they don’t always. Recently, in Report No. 20-01, the State Auditor took DBEDT to task for failing to report \$6.5 million in non-general fund moneys. DBEDT’s response? Just that they’ll “take corrective action.” Not even a “Whoops! We screwed up and promise to do better next time!” This followed closely on the heels of Report No. 19-16, where the Auditor found that \$1.04 million in non-general fund moneys administered by the Attorney General wasn’t reported. That department responded that they “shall establish procedures to assure required reports are issued.” Is it any wonder that it’s getting harder and harder to follow the money and rein in government spending?

Perhaps as a result of the foregoing concerns, the Legislature has itself established criteria for when a special fund may be maintained (HRS section 37-52.3). These criteria are that the special fund:

(1) Serves a need, as demonstrated by:

(A) The purpose of the program to be supported by the fund;

(B) The scope of the program, including financial information on fees to be charged, sources of projected revenue, and costs; and

(C) An explanation of why the program cannot be implemented successfully under the general fund appropriation process;

(2) Reflects a clear nexus between the benefits sought and charges made upon the program users or beneficiaries or a clear link between the program and the sources of revenue, as opposed to

serving primarily as a means to provide the program or users with an automatic means of support that is removed from the normal budget and appropriation process;

(3) Provides an appropriate means of financing for the program or activity that is used only when essential to the successful operation of the program or activity; and

(4) Demonstrates the capacity to be financially self-sustaining.

Of these, at least three of the criteria are violated. There is no indication that the proposed Fund can be financially self-sustaining, and there is no indication why the general fund appropriation process is incompatible with the program. Establishing this special fund is inappropriate.

Digested: 3/29/2025



Submitted Online: March 28, 2025

TO: Senate Committee on Ways & Means
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair

FROM: Eva Andrade, President

RE: Opposition to HB1308 SD1 Relating to Sports Wagering

Hawaii Family Forum strongly opposes HB1308 SD1, which would legalize for-profit sports betting in Hawaii for the first time in our state's history. This bill represents a major cultural shift with significant consequences for families, individuals struggling with gambling addiction, and the broader common good. If this bill passes, it will change sports in Hawaii forever.

The ease of 24/7 access to sports gambling through computers and smartphones would effectively place a virtual sportsbook in every home, dorm room, and workplace. This level of accessibility, combined with the addictive nature of gambling, is a dangerous mix—comparable to the explosion of online pornography addiction due to unrestricted access. Gambling addiction is linked to financial ruin, divorce, substance abuse, depression, and even suicide.

As an example, New Jersey legalized sports betting in 2018, and since then, the state's Council on Compulsive Gambling has seen a staggering 277% increase in calls to its problem gambling hotline—many from young adults, particularly young menⁱ. A government-commissioned study by Rutgers University found that 6% of New Jersey's population now suffers from high-risk problem gamblingⁱⁱ. The issue has become so severe that in 2024, the New Jersey governor established a special task force to address problem gambling. Why would Hawaii want to follow this same destructive path?

Sport, at its best, builds character. It teaches discipline, teamwork, and perseverance. It brings people together—regardless of background—creating moments of pure joy and shared excitement. But when sports gambling is commercialized, it strips away these noble aspects and turns the game into just another way to make money. Instead of inspiring athletes to push their limits for the love of the game, it turns them into commodities—tools for profit, often without their knowledge or consent.

Sports in Hawaii will forever be changed if you gamble with the future of sports.

For generations, sports in Hawai'i have been more than just games – they've been a unifying part of our island culture. From youth leagues in our neighborhoods to high school rivalries and UH athletics, sports have promoted ohana, discipline, teamwork and community pride. They bring us together in celebration, not competition for profit. Legalizing sports betting, however, threatens to fundamentally change how we experience sports in Hawai'i.

Do we want to change the heart of sports in Hawai'i from a foundation of community pride to a pursuit of profit? Legalized sports betting isn't just a policy shift – it's a cultural shift. And once that door is opened, it will be hard to close. Let's protect the purity, unity, and joy of sports in Hawai'i. Let's keep sports for our keiki, not for the bookies.

For these reasons, Hawaii Family Forum urges you to vote NO on HB1308 SD1 and reject the creation of sports betting in our state – regardless of what you call it.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

ⁱ Brier, B. (2024, September 26). *Surge in problem gambling in NJ — And in calls for help*. NJ Spotlight News. Retrieved February 10, 2025, from <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/09/problem-gambling-surges-in-new-jersey-more-young-men-call-helpline-sports-betting/>

ⁱⁱ Nower, L., Ph.D, Stanmyre, J. F., ABD, M.S.W, & Anthony, V. (. L., Ph.D (n.d.). *The Prevalence of Online and Land-Based Gambling in New Jersey*. Rutgers (Center for Gambling Studies). Retrieved February 10, 2025, from <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/09/problem-gambling-surges-in-new-jersey-more-young-men-call-helpline-sports-betting/>



Iron Workers Stabilization Fund

T. George Paris
Managing Director

April 2, 2025
10:01 am

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

CR 211 & Videoconference

Re: Support for HB1308 HD3 SD1-Gambling:Sports Wagering: Fantasy Sports: DBEDT

Aloha Chair, Delacruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki and members of Committee on Ways and Means,

The Ironworkers Stabilization Fund submits this testimony in strong support of the legalization of sports wagering within the State of Hawaii. The urgency of this matter is underscored by the 2024 ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) report, which reveals a deeply concerning trend: approximately 180,000 Hawaii residents are actively considering relocation due to escalating financial pressures. This potential exodus poses a significant threat to our state's workforce stability and the integrity of our communities, forcing families to make the difficult decision to leave their homes.

Furthermore, Hawaii is currently navigating a period of fiscal constraint, exacerbated by recent budget reductions. With a substantial portion of our state budget, roughly 20%, reliant on federal funding, we face a precarious financial landscape that demands proactive and sustainable solutions.

The legalization of sports wagering presents a viable strategy for economic diversification and long-term fiscal stability. We believe an implementation of a 15-20%% tax on gaming of a regulated sports wagering would generate a new, reliable source of tax revenue. This revenue stream can be allocated to address the rising cost of living, bolster critical public services such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure, and stimulate job creation. We must prioritize innovative approaches to keep our people home. The departure or potential departure of Native Hawaiians and long-term residents represents a significant cultural loss.

We acknowledge the concerns regarding the potential impact of sports wagering on Hawaii's cultural fabric. However, we contend our population drop of 15,000 residents a year is already precipitating a profound cultural shift. Moreover, the unregulated and illegal gambling within our communities for over 50 years needs a regulated framework to mitigate its negative impacts. For too long we have kept the pennies home and watched the dollars fly away and soon we'll lose pennies. We urge this committee to pass this bill to **keep local families homes.**

T. George Paris
Managing Director



March 31, 2025

Position: Opposition of HB1308, HD3, SD1

To: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Llasmin Chaîne, LSW, Executive Director, Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women

Re: Testimony in Opposition of HB1308, HD3, SD1, Relating to Sports Wagering

Hearing: Wednesday, April 2, 2025, 10:01 a.m.
Conference Room 211, State Capitol

On behalf of the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women, I would like to express my **opposition of HB1308 HD3 SD1 to legalize online sports gambling.**

Hawai'i families are already struggling—why legalize a highly addictive, financially destructive industry that will tear families down instead of building them up? The only winners in gambling are billion-dollar corporations, while **families, nonprofits and government agencies bear the social and economic consequences of the broke and broken.** Let's prioritize our people and values over profits and predatory industries. Once we open this door, we won't be able to close it.

Online gambling is THE MOST ADDICTIVE form of gambling. Pairing gambling with smartphone dependency, AI-driven targeted ads, and 24/7 access, which creates a supercharged form of exploitation and addiction.

Multiple testifiers have noted that **this measure is ill advised**, given Hawai'i's lack of a gaming commission and the absence of relevant state infrastructure to oversee a venture of this kind. **Why would we choose this moment to legalize gambling and increase addiction?** Our non-profit service providers and state departments face imminent federal cutbacks and our working families are already struggling.

I respectfully **urge this Committee to defer HB1308, HD3, SD1.** When deciding the fate of this measure, **the limited economic gains of this bill should be weighed against the considerable community cost.** Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.



April 2, 2025

HB1308 - OPPOSE Sports Gambling

Aloha Senators:

HI Good Neighbor strongly opposes all versions of HB1308, the legalization of online sports gambling.

For generations, Hawai'i has stood firm against legalized gambling to safeguard our communities, our families, and the values that have shaped who we are and how we care for each other. HB1308 will erode those values, turning our state into a place where greed and exploitation replace our shared responsibility for one another. We must continue to protect the integrity of who we are.

Our government should never permit or facilitate the exploitation of people's misfortunes and addictions for financial gain.

Hawai'i families are already struggling—why legalize a highly addictive, financially destructive industry that will tear families down instead of build them up? The only winners in gambling are billion-dollar corporations, while families and communities bear the social and economic consequences of the broke and broken. Let's prioritize our people and values over profits and predatory industries.

Why This Matters:

- This is just the beginning.
 - The MULTIBILLION dollar gambling industry is aggressively targeting Hawai'i. There are at least 13 registered lobbyists in the state working hard to push this bill through. Boyd Gaming and DraftKings each have five registered lobbyists.
 - Once sports gambling is legalized, casinos and other forms of gambling will soon follow. The state will become financially dependent on an industry that profits from addiction and loss.
- Legal gambling won't eliminate illegal gambling. In states that have legalized online betting, underground markets still thrive by offering better odds and tax-free winnings.

- Legalization normalizes gambling and makes it more accessible and marketable, which expands gambling harm rather than containing it. With non-stop advertising, celebrity endorsements, and flashy promotions, online gambling will become a normal, everyday activity, drawing in more players, including young and first-time gamblers who never would have bet otherwise. The industry spent over \$400 million on ads in 2024.
- Online gambling is THE MOST ADDICTIVE form of gambling. Pairing gambling with smartphone dependency, AI-driven targeting, and 24/7 access creates a supercharged form of exploitation and addiction. Man vs. machine—we stand no chance.
- Regulation won't stop predatory practices. Legal sportsbooks use manipulative tactics like risk-free bets, data tracking, targeted ads, and VIP hosts to keep users hooked.
- The social consequences are devastating. Gambling addiction is as destructive as drug addiction, increasing rates of crime, bankruptcy, domestic violence, divorce, broken families, homelessness and suicide.

We should heed the words of a wise Vermont legislator:

"I would hope that just-minded legislators in other states take a hard look at how these predatory contracts extract wealth from their most vulnerable residents. The losses are predictable, and the harm is measurable. No state should rely on a funding mechanism that depends on its people losing." – Rep. Troy Headrick, Vermont legislator who recently tried to repeal Vermont's laws that legalized sports betting and the lottery

Hawai'i and Utah are the last two states standing firm against this harmful, predatory industry because we understand that gambling takes far more than it ever gives.

Let's make it clear: we will not trade our families, our values, and our future for profit. **Vote NO on HB1308.**

Mahalo,

Christine Otto Zaa



The Truth About Commercialized Online Sports Gambling: **The Facts Why You Should OPPOSE HB1308**

Dear Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Hawaii Senate Ways and Means Committee:

I am writing on behalf of our Hawaii members of Stop Predatory Gambling, a national nonprofit organization with members in all 50 states whose mission is to reveal the truth behind commercialized gambling to advocate for those who have suffered harm, to prevent more victims, and to champion policy reforms that stop *predatory* gambling.

SUMMARY

- 1) What is NOT “Predatory Gambling”? Pg. 2**
- 2) What IS “Predatory Gambling?” Pg. 2**
- 3) Why Is Predatory Gambling Called "The Big Con" and How Is It Different Than Every Other Business, Including Other Vices Like Alcohol and Tobacco? Pg. 3**
- 4) The amount of illegal gambling has increased since states introduced online gambling, the complete opposite of what gambling operators claimed would happen. Pg. 4**
- 5) States Are Experiencing a Metastasizing Epidemic of Gambling Addiction Among Young Adults and Teens Because of the Exploitation and Manipulation By Gambling Operators.Pg. 6**
- 6) Online Gambling Operators Use Deceptive Marketing Tactics to Minimize the Public Health and Financial Risks of Online Sports Gambling. Pg. 7**

- 7) **“Responsible Gambling” campaigns funded by the gambling industry and state government officials are a sham. Their primary purpose is merely to *give the appearance* that something is being done to protect the public from predatory and dangerous business practices. Pg. 9**

Background: The Facts Why You Should OPPOSE HB1308

1) What is NOT “Predatory Gambling”?

Predatory gambling is NOT the Friday night poker game with friends. Or the March Madness Bracket. Or buying a square in the Super Bowl office pool. Or the bingo night at a local Catholic church. Or a wager on the golf course with the guys from work.

These informal events are examples of *social gambling*. There is no “house” skimming a large profit, guaranteeing the participant will inevitably lose over the long-term. No one is wagering continuously at rapid speeds of every five seconds, hour after hour. Very few people feel an intense “buzz” or high from the experience. There’s no aggressive and deceptive marketing to get people to gamble more often with bigger sums of money. No one is lending or borrowing cash to participate or ends up losing their entire pay check. It doesn’t go on 24 hours day, every day of the week, year round. And it doesn’t require the majority of Americans who rarely gamble to subsidize it with any of their own money.

When gambling lobbyists push claims of “illegal gambling,” they include these common forms of social gambling.

2) What IS “Predatory Gambling?”

Predatory gambling is when state governments partner with powerful corporate gambling interests to use *commercialized* gambling - *gambling being run as a business* - to exploit citizens and their communities. Unlike any other business, in commercialized gambling

there is a *predatory and adversarial relationship* between the gambling operator and its customer, the gambler. *They are trying to take you down.*

Online gambling operators, their partners in government, and gambling industry lobbyists like to call it “regulated gaming.” But for the rest of us, the only term that accurately describes it is predatory gambling.

No form of commercialized gambling is more predatory and dangerous than online gambling which these bills would permit if passed. The reason is because it offers unlimited access and action to hardcore forms of gambling. It’s the equivalent of opening a Las Vegas-style casino in every bedroom, dorm room, office, smart phone, and computer with internet access across Hawaii, 24 hours a day. At the same time, the online gambling operator uses the latest data tracking and marketing technologies *to induce* citizens to gamble relentlessly with tactics such as “free gambling wagers” and a barrage of text messages offering “bonus bets.”

3) Why Is Predatory Gambling Called "The Big Con" and How Is It Different Than Every Other Business, Including Other Vices Like Alcohol and Tobacco?

What separates commercialized gambling from every other business, including other vices like alcohol and tobacco, is it’s a big con game. It’s a form of consumer financial fraud in the family of price-gouging and false advertising.

If you pay for a pizza, a ticket to a sporting event, or a glass of wine, that’s what you receive in return. It’s a one-for-one exchange. In commercialized gambling, what you receive is a financial exchange offering the lure that *you might* win money. But this financial exchange is mathematically stacked against you so inevitably you will lose your money in the end, especially if you keep gambling. Citizens are conned into thinking they can win money on games that are designed to get them fleeced in the end. That’s what the phrase “the House always wins” really means. Success only comes at someone else’s expense.

This con is the reason why commercialized gambling is still illegal *unless* you partner with state government. None of us can run our own state lottery. None of us can run our own casino or online gambling business unless we're in partnership with the state.

The most revealing fact about “The Big Con” is this: with the zeal of a teetotaler, most of the people who operate and invest in commercialized gambling schemes such as online gambling, along with the public officials who lobby to bring them in, **rarely, if ever, gamble themselves.** Yet these hypocrites cause life-changing financial losses for tens of millions of Americans. We have awarded these individuals special status by inducting them into [“The Hypocrite Hall of Fame”](#) which you can view by visiting our website.¹

4) The amount of illegal gambling has increased since states introduced online gambling, the complete opposite of what gambling operators claimed would happen.

The Sunday New York Times's series in November 2022 on the national lobbying campaign to push online gambling revealed that the American Gambling Association (AGA) orchestrated the phony “They’re already doing it”/“We’ll reduce illegal gambling” narrative as a multimillion dollar national public relations campaign to create a fake sense of momentum for online gambling.²

Yet at the same time it was peddling its “We’ll reduce illegal gambling” fiction to state legislatures across the US, the AGA wrote a 2022 letter to then US Attorney General Merrick Garland calling on him to take action against the growing problem of illegal online gambling, ***four years after legalization began!*** In the AGA’s *own words* to AG Garland:

- “A vast illegal sports betting market continues to exist through offshore websites, which have established well-known brands—such as Bovada, MyBookie and

¹ “The Hypocrite Hall of Fame,” January 2025. <https://www.stoppredatorygambling.org/meet-the-men-and-women-enshrined-as-members-of-the-hypocrite-hall-of-fame/>

² “A Risky Wager: Key Findings From The Times’ Investigation of Sports Betting,” *The Sunday New York Times*, Nov, 20, 2022. Pg. 1. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/20/business/sports-betting-investigation.html>

BetOnline—that operate with a high degree of visibility and are readily accessible to every American with a smart phone or Internet connection. These illegal sites also enjoy many competitive advantages that allow them to offer better odds and promotions...”³

- “52 percent of gamblers continue to utilize illegal bookmakers.”⁴
- “Internet searches for illegal betting sites increased by 38% last year, faster than the rate of searches for legal betting sites.”⁵
- “Searches for offshore online gambling brands represented a majority of all sportsbook searches.”⁶

The facts coming in from the states themselves further demonstrate this truth: according to a study commissioned by the Massachusetts Gambling Commission, the state where DraftKings is headquartered, **citizens who use illegal sports books in Massachusetts jumped from 4 percent in 2022 to 18 percent in 2023, after sports betting was legalized.**⁷

It is also important to highlight that the figures promoted by gambling industry lobbyists about the alleged problem of “illegal gambling” occurring in Hawaii *are not* coming from an independent source. Gambling lobbyists are not citing data produced by the FBI or the Hawaii Department of Law Enforcement. The source of their numbers are gambling

³ American Gambling Association Letter to US Attorney General Merrick Garland, April 13, 2022: https://www.americangaming.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/AGA_DoJIIllegalGambling-4.13.22.pdf

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ American Gambling Association Letter to US Attorney General Merrick Garland, April 13, 2022: https://www.americangaming.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/AGA_DoJIIllegalGambling-4.13.22.pdf

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ “Addiction in mind, Mass Gambling officials mull stricter advertising regulations,” *Commonwealth Magazine*, June 24, 2024 <https://commonwealthbeacon.org/gambling/addiction-in-mind-mass-gaming-officials-mull-stricter-advertising-regulations/>

industry trade groups and gambling consultants, entities that have a strong financial interest in commercialized gambling bills being pushed through the Hawaii Legislature.

Despite this mounting pile of facts, gambling industry lobbyists and the state legislators who carry the online gambling bills continue to willfully mislead their colleagues, the media, and the public by claiming that allowing online gambling would reduce illegal gambling. Why do they continue to make these blatantly false claims?

5) States That Have Allowed Online Gambling Are Experiencing a Metastasizing Epidemic of Gambling Addiction Among Young Adults and Teens Because of the Exploitation and Manipulation By Gambling Operators. Passing HB1308 Will Unleash This Epidemic Upon Young People Across Hawaii.

Almost every major national news organization has reported on the epidemic of gambling addiction among young people metastasizing across the US because of the introduction of online gambling.⁸

Young adults, especially young males, are being targeted by online gambling apps and exposed to a barrage of gambling marketing to incentivizing them to gamble. It's a key reason why states are reporting the number one demographic calling gambling addiction hotlines today are young adults and teens.⁹

Kids used to collect sports cards growing up as fans of their favorite athletes and teams. Now kids are gambling. The high frequency of marketing by gambling operators has normalized gambling for kids, leading them to believe gambling was central to playing and watching sports.

⁸ “‘We’re killing the youth of America’: calls grow for crackdown on US gambling,” *The Guardian*, December 1, 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/dec/01/sports-betting-regulation-gambling-addiction>

⁹ “Teens Are Developing ‘Severe Gambling Problems’ as Online Betting Surges: An increasing amount of evidence suggests that young adults and even minors are easily able to bet online despite a variety of industry safeguards.” *Vice*, October 11, 2023. <https://www.vice.com/en/article/4a37mp/teens-are-developing-severe-gambling-problems-as-online-betting-surges>

Exposing young people to gambling ads normalizes and desensitizes them to the dangers of gambling and makes them more likely to develop problems later in life. They grow up mistakenly thinking it's a harmless activity. The younger children start gambling, the more likely it is they will become habitual and addicted gamblers.

After the harm that online gambling operators have inflicted in other states, why would Hawaii public officials welcome them in to target the state's young adults and teens?

6) Online Gambling Operators Use Deceptive Marketing Tactics to Minimize the Public Health and Financial Risks of Online Sports Gambling

The American Psychiatric Association's DSM-V, considered "the mental health bible" by hospitals, health insurance companies, and other health care professionals, now recognizes commercialized gambling as addictive as cocaine, opioids, and heroin.¹⁰ Despite its status as a known, dangerous addictive product, the corporate online gambling industry currently markets its offerings as "harmless fun," making itself attractive to young people by offering "free bets" and normalizing the activity with massive advertising and marketing.

But these corporations are also deceptively minimizing the actual financial harm their products cause. Many citizens who have become addicted now have personal debt levels *close to \$100,000*.¹¹

In addition, a recent major national study found that online sports gambling has decreased the consumer financial health of everyday Americans, especially young men.¹² According to the study, states with legal online sports gambling saw a significant drop in average credit

¹⁰ American Psychiatric Association, (DSM-5), 2025. <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2023/07/how-gambling-affects-the-brain>

¹¹ "The Human Cost of the Sports-Betting Boom: Why is no one paying attention?" *Men's Health Magazine*, September 2023. <https://www.menshealth.com/health/a44652587/sports-betting-gambling-dangers/>

¹² "The Financial Consequences of Legalized Sports Gambling," a study by Dr. Brett Hollenbeck of UCLA, Poet Larsen of USC, and Dr. Davide Proserpio of USC, July 2024. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4903302

score and significant increases in both the amount of money in debt collections and bankruptcy filings and the amount of money in debt collections.¹³

Allowing online sports gambling in Hawaii will dramatically harm the financial well-being of tens of thousands of families across the state. We don't need to speculate about what the toll of predatory gambling will be in Hawaii. Just look at the massive financial losses that Americans on the mainland are already suffering to predatory gambling:

- **Americans on the mainland are on a downward spiral *to lose almost \$1 trillion of their personal wealth* to commercialized sports gambling, regional casinos, state lotteries, and video gambling machine venues combined over the next five years.**¹⁴
- **Americans on the mainland lost more than \$150 billion in personal wealth to predatory gambling in 2024.**¹⁵
- **Americans on the mainland *are losing almost \$300,000 of personal wealth every minute* to predatory gambling.**

The people of Hawaii have largely been spared these massive, life-changing financial losses because of the foresight and wisdom of prior Hawaii legislatures and governors.

¹³ "The Financial Consequences of Legalized Sports Gambling," a study by Dr. Brett Hollenbeck of UCLA, Poet Larsen of USC, and Dr. Davide Proserpio of USC, July 2024. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4903302

¹⁴ H2 Gambling Capital, 2025. h2gc.com

¹⁵ H2 Gambling Capital, 2025. h2gc.com

7) “Responsible Gambling” campaigns funded by the gambling industry and state government officials are a sham. Their primary purpose is merely to *give the appearance* that something is being done to protect the public from predatory and dangerous business practices.

The corporate online gambling industry is relentlessly targeting individuals who are demonstrating fundamental and visible symptoms of suffering from a gambling addiction.¹⁶ Operators have precise records and data about an individual’s online gambling behavior and patterns such as the amount of money an individual gambles, the *frequency* with which he or she gambles, whether an individual “chases” one’s losses, and whether the person demonstrates a preoccupation with gambling.¹⁷

Gambling operators often assign “hosts” to keep in continuous contact with these individuals, creating a “personal” relationship that usually involves hundreds of text messages that can begin first thing in the morning and continue throughout regular working hours, the subject of which are almost always special financial bonuses, deposit incentives, and credits for past gambling losses.¹⁸ This predatory behavior is essential to the online gambling business model: as reported by *The Wall Street Journal*, 70% of online gambling revenue comes from *less than 1/2 of 1% of all gambling customers*.¹⁹

These types of predatory business practices are why there are at least two essential questions that *every* state legislator who is serious about their job has a duty to ask. The first is what percent of gambling profits is based upon citizens who have become addicted gamblers? You will learn the gambling business model depends upon the addicted citizen:

- Reinforcing what *The Wall Street Journal* uncovered in its own investigation, one of the most influential studies of online gambling in the world found that 86% of gross online gambling profits were extracted from 5% of gamblers.²⁰

¹⁶ "A Child Psychiatrist Tried to Quit Gambling - Betting Apps Kept Her Hooked," *The Wall Street Journal*, by Katherine Sayre, February 18, 2024. https://www.wsj.com/business/hospitality/gambling-addiction-sports-betting-apps-4463cdeo?mod=Searchresults_pos1&page=1

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ "Exploring Online Patterns of Play," National Center for Social Research (UK), March 9, 2021. https://www.begambleaware.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/PoP_Interim%20Report_Short_Final.pdf

- In the brick-and-mortar casino business, it's been reported there are "at least nine independent studies demonstrating that addicted gamblers generate up to 60% of total gambling revenues."²¹

The second question to ask is what percent of gambling profits comes from people who follow "responsible gambling codes of conduct?" The reality is the percentage of gambling revenues that comes from people who follow "responsible gambling codes of conduct" (i.e., the casual gambler) is *virtually irrelevant to their profits*. NYU Professor Natasha Schull reported in her nationally acclaimed book *Addiction By Design* that people who follow responsible gambling guidelines made up 75% of the players but contribute a mere 4% of gambling profits.²² "If responsible gambling were successful then the industry would probably shut down for lack of income," the author of the study said ²³

Conclusion

Predatory gambling, including its latest form of online commercialized sports gambling, is an antiquated, outdated public policy and a relic of past failures of leadership. It has inflicted life-changing financial losses on tens of millions of Americans.²⁴ Its profits are based upon cultivating an addiction that causes a degree of human misery like very few things can including significant increases in rates of personal bankruptcy, divorce, domestic violence, and suicides.²⁵ And lastly, it has proven to be the ultimate budget gimmick as a state government revenue source, leading to higher taxes for less services over the long term.²⁶ *You pay even if you don't play.*

²¹ "How Casinos Enable Gambling Addicts," *The Atlantic*, By John Rosengren, December 2016

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/12/losing-it-all/505814/>

²² Natasha Dow Schull, PhD, *Addiction By Design, Machine Gambling in Las Vegas*, Pg. 267 (2012), available at <http://press.princeton.edu/titles/9156.html>

²³ Natasha Dow Schull, PhD, *Addiction By Design, Machine Gambling in Las Vegas*, Pg. 267 (2012), available at <http://press.princeton.edu/titles/9156.html>

²⁴ Natasha Dow Schull, PhD, *Addiction By Design, Machine Gambling in Las Vegas*, Pg. 267 (2012), available at <http://press.princeton.edu/titles/9156.html>

²⁵ Institute for American Values, *Why Casinos Matter* Institute for American Values, Council on Casinos, *Why Casinos Matter, Thirty-One Evidence-Based Propositions from the Health and Social Sciences*, September 2013, at 29, <https://stoppredatorygambling.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/2013-Why-Casinos-Matter-FINAL.pdf>

²⁶ "State Revenues from Gambling: Short-Term Relief, Long-Term Disappointment," Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government, SUNY-Albany, April 2016, http://www.rockinst.org/pdf/government_finance/2016-04-12-Blinken_Report_Three.pdf

Over the last forty years, the citizens of Hawaii have experienced better economic mobility out of poverty, more stable families, less addiction, less domestic violence, stronger communities, less state budget problems, and lower taxes because the state officials said No to predatory gambling.

Thank you for your serious consideration of these facts. If you need further information about this issue, I invite you and your staff to please contact us by email mail@stoppredatorygambling.org or phone (202) 567-6996.

Thank you for your work.

Sincerely,



Les Bernal, National Director
Stop Predatory Gambling

About Stop Predatory Gambling

Stop Predatory Gambling believes people are worth more than money. We are a national nonprofit organization with members of all political stripes in all 50 states whose mission is to reveal the truth behind commercialized gambling to advocate for those who have suffered harm, to prevent more victims, and to champion policy reforms that stop *predatory* gambling. We do not accept financial contributions from commercialized gambling interests.



**Hawaii Senate
Committee on Ways & Means
Testimony in Support of HB 1308, HD3, SD1
April 2, 2025**

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Jeremy Limun, Director of Government Affairs, representing BetMGM, a top online sports betting company with active operations in 29 markets across North America. BetMGM appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1308, HD3, SD1.

HB 1308, if adopted, would create a licensed, controlled, and regulated sports betting industry in the state of Hawaii. Under the bill, only qualified and suitable operators that have the necessary experience, operational expertise and financial capability would be licensed and authorized to conduct sports betting. The operators would be required to undergo background investigation; pay license fees to ensure the administration and regulation of Hawaii sports betting is cost-neutral to the state; and more importantly pay gross sports betting tax revenues. Part of those tax proceeds would be deposited into a problem gambling prevention and treatment special fund.

***HB 1308 Would Generate Taxes for Hawaii; Protect Consumers; and
Provide Hawaii Residents A Legal, Regulated Alternative to an Existing
Illegal Sports Betting Industry.***

As you know, sports betting has been legalized in 38 states plus the District of Columbia, of which 32 have legalized online sports betting. Each of those jurisdictions has created a legal industry that acts as an alternative to an illegal and unregulated industry that **are not** subject to state licensure, control or regulation; **do not** invest in responsible gambling; **are not** subject to state consumer protection or anti-money laundering requirements; and **do not** pay gross sports betting taxes to the state.

The reality is that sports betting – a highly popular activity – already is happening in Hawaii today, but state residents currently lack any legal and safe alternative to the highly entrenched illegal and unregulated sports betting industry. This illicit market is pervasive and continues to flourish across all mediums – in person, over the Internet, and through sophisticated mobile applications – in states that have not legalized sports betting, including Hawaii. Indeed, top illegal offshore sports books like Stake and Bovada received about the same amount of traffic in the United States as legal operators, but most of that traffic is coming from states where sports betting is still illegal.

Additionally, there is also a growing presence of online “social sports books and sweepstakes.” Readily available on major online stores for download, including in Hawaii, most of these illegal platforms are offshore with headquarters in Cyprus, Malta and Gibraltar; take advantage of legal loopholes around sweepstakes; and provide customers the ability to wager on sports. While

advertised as “social sports books,” these platforms are anything but and run multi-million-dollar marketing campaigns, including through social media and celebrity influencers, that often target teens and young people.

This illicit industry in recent years has grown at an astonishing rate. More than a million Americans play each month, and the games drew nearly \$6 billion in player purchases, including \$1.9 billion in net revenue, in 2023. This year, the industry expects to see \$11.4 billion in player purchases and \$4 billion in net revenue.

Furthermore, American event-based trading companies, such as Kalshi – which had allowed bettors to make wagers on the U.S. presidential election, have also entered sports betting, allowing users to place bets in all 50 states, including on the most recent Super Bowl. Just like Stake, Bovada, and many other illegal operators, Kalshi takes sports bets from Hawaii residents.

Exhibit 1: Event-based trading company Kalshi advertises itself as a sports betting platform that takes bets on sporting events, including on the most recent Super Bowl, in all 50 states.

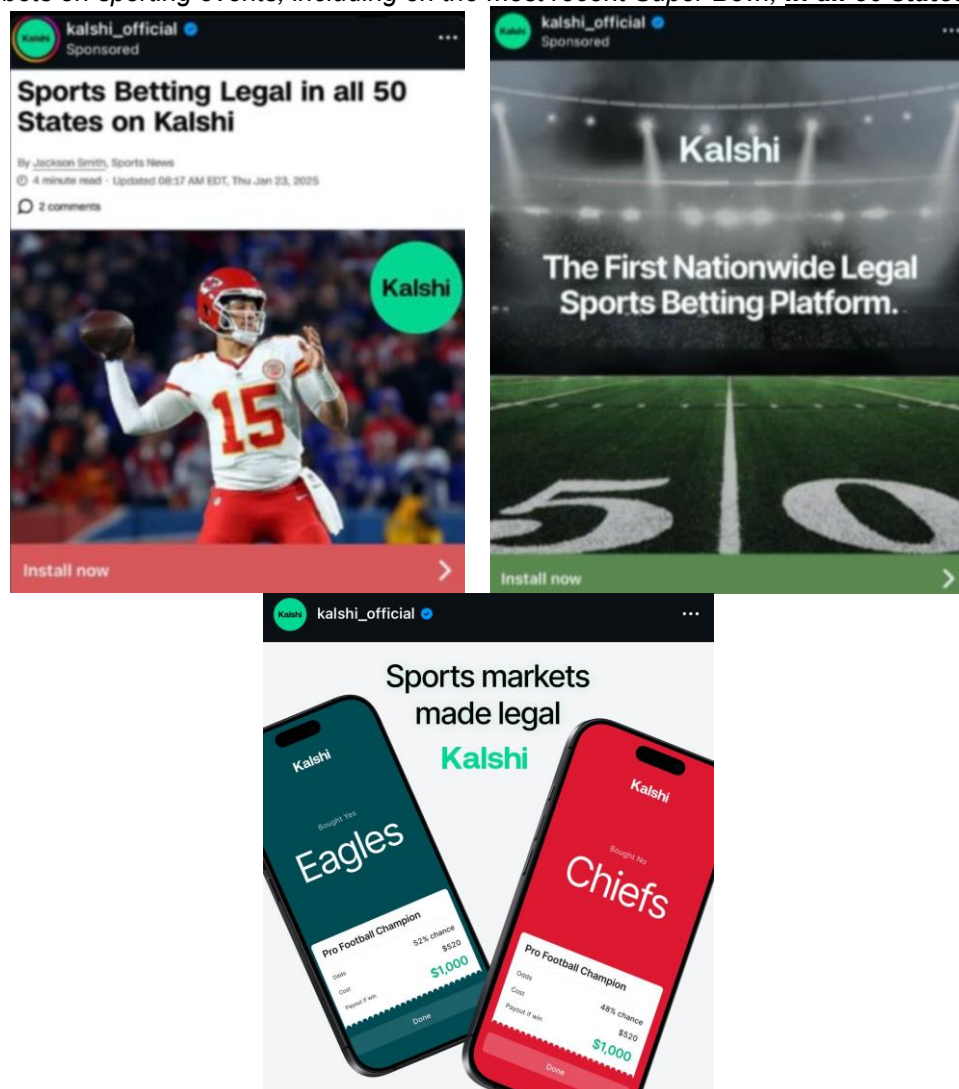
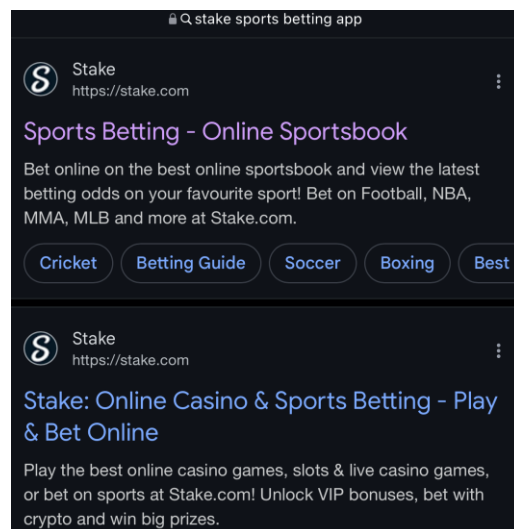
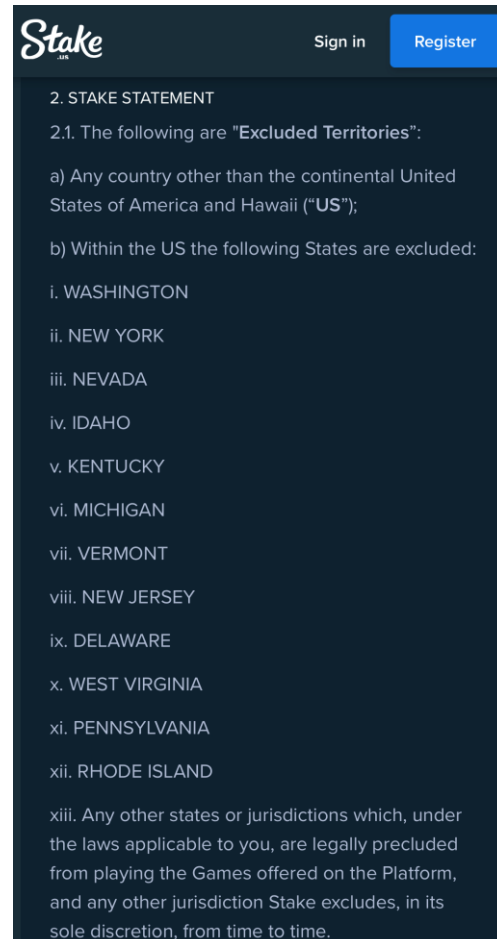
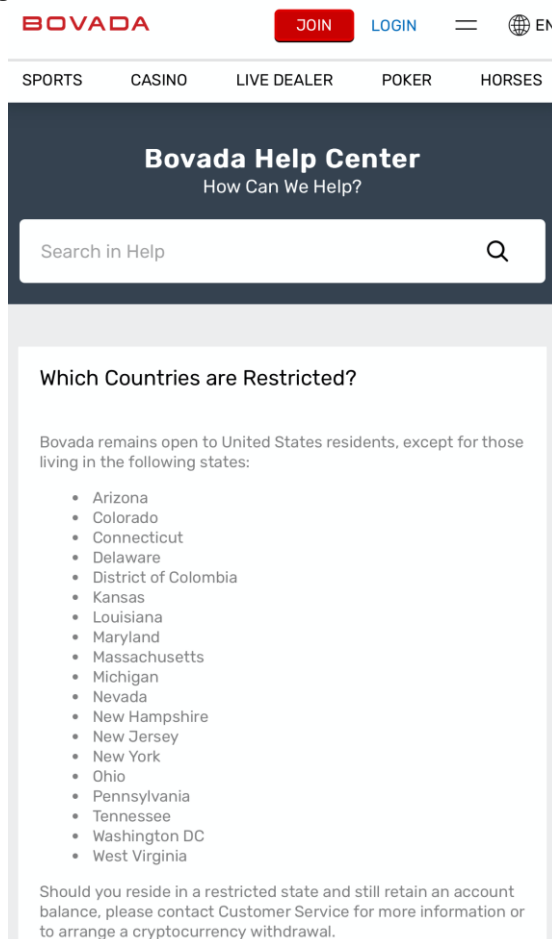


Exhibit 2: The terms and conditions of Bovada and Stake (a sweepstakes-based sports betting platform) make clear that these sites do not block wagers made from Hawaii and many other states – **Stake even explicitly indicates that they accept wagers from Hawaii**. Please note also that virtually all the states blocked by Bovada and Stake are states **that have a legal and regulated framework for sports betting**.



Yet, despite their rapid proliferation the illegal and gray-market online sports betting industry, including this latest crop of event-based trading platforms and online sweepstakes, is not subject to any state gross sports betting tax; does not offer any meaningful responsible gambling tools; and does not employ sophisticated know-your-customer (KYC), identity- or age-verification processes – to the contrary, many of these platforms allow prospective customers to simply check a box and self-certify that they are of gambling age.

Opponents of HB 1308 have asserted, without any empirical basis, that legalized sports betting leads to higher rates of violent crime. Opponents also have cited misleading studies asserting, again without any empirical basis as to causation, that legalized sports betting *causes and leads* to various social ills, including increases in bankruptcies and even domestic violence.

First, it is important to note that, as stated, 39 U.S. jurisdictions have legalized sports betting, of which 32 have authorized online sports betting. None of those states have repealed their sports betting statutes – to the contrary, these states continue to generate sports betting tax revenues; provide their residents a legal and safe alternative; and refuse to go back to a time when they ceded the sports betting market to unlicensed and illegal operators that did not provide their consumers any protections nor safeguards.

Finally, the studies cited by the opponents of HB 1308 miss one essential point – as outlined above, **illegal online sports betting is already happening**. The purpose of legalizing and regulating this activity is to ensure the state has dedicated funding to address problem gambling harms and can require operators to invest and conduct responsible gambling programs, including self-exclusion lists; offer deposit, wager, and time self-limits; as well as message responsible gambling interventions to patrons who may be exhibiting certain markers of harm.

The National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) [has indicated](#) that most individuals are able to gamble in a fun and responsible manner and that only a very small percentage of the population (around 1 to 3 percent) suffer from a spectrum of gambling disorder. This explains why regulated sports betting platforms and policymakers are focused on getting problem gambling treatment assistance and resources to this small percentage of patrons. The regulatory approach and online tools employed by legal operators can help better identify patrons who need help, rather than pushing them toward illegal bookies or illegal apps whose servers are often housed overseas.

Again, thank you very much for this opportunity and I welcome any questions you may have on this important and timely topic.



Chair Dela Cruz, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways & Means, thank you for your time today. My name is Rebecca London, Senior Government Affairs Manager for DraftKings Inc., and I am here today to provide testimony on behalf of DraftKings in support of HB1308 HD3 SD1, relating to sports betting. We appreciate the opportunity to participate in today's hearing—and additional conversations—to discuss the importance of Hawaii embracing a competitive, fully mobile sports wagering market.

DraftKings is a digital sports entertainment and gaming company with products that range across daily fantasy, regulated gaming, and digital media. Headquartered in Boston and launched in 2012, DraftKings is the only U.S.-based vertically integrated sports betting operator. DraftKings Sportsbook is live with mobile and/or retail sports betting operations pursuant to regulations in 28 states, Washington, D.C., and in Ontario, Canada. DraftKings is committed to being a responsible steward of this new era in real-money gaming by developing and promoting educational information and tools to help all players enjoy our games responsibly.

DraftKings supports a sports wagering framework in Hawaii that protects consumers, generates revenue for the state, and stamps out the pervasive illegal market.

It is important to recognize that sports wagering is already taking place in Hawaii, with an estimated hundreds of millions in illegal wagers each year.¹ Nearly all the sports wagers in Hawaii are placed online through websites in the robust illegal market, where sophisticated illegal operators capitalize on the popularity of this form of entertainment.

To create an effective legal market, legal operators must be able to compete with pricing from illegal, offshore sportsbooks that do not face the same taxation and regulatory costs. Barriers to market entry, such as high taxes and fees, reduce their ability to offer competitive pricing or effectively market and innovate, all significant factors for consumers when making the decision on where to spend their money.

A marketplace with multiple choices for consumers leads to a better consumer experience that forces operators to innovate, offering new and exciting products to residents in Hawaii, and to compete with one another to provide consumers the best odds. A market with multiple operators increases the overall economic impact that sports wagering has in the state through license fees, advertising, and promotional events. Further, a competitive mobile market provides steady tax revenue.

Estimates based on data collected by the American Gaming Association, sizing the illegal market, predict revenue for the state of Hawaii in the tens of millions of dollars annually. These

¹ *Sizing the Illegal and Unregulated Gaming Markets in the United States*, American Gaming Association, November 2022. Available at americangaming.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Sizing-the-Illegal-and-Unregulated-Gaming-Markets-in-the-US.pdf



funds can be used for important policy priorities this legislature is currently looking to fund. This revenue is in addition to the licensing, investigative, and administrative fees the regulatory body has the authority to assess to support licensing and regulatory oversight.

We are currently working with relevant Departments to determine the appropriate fee structure for the regulation of this new industry, and we welcome the opportunity to discuss what is appropriate for the state of Hawaii, with both legislators and regulators.

In a well-regulated market, consumers benefit from a variety of competitive and innovative products, as well as the robust problem gaming resources and consumer protections offered by these regulated companies that are not available in illegal markets.

Regulated operators, like DraftKings and other members of the Sports Betting Alliance, take the issues of underage wagering and problem gaming seriously. We use a number of tools and technology to verify our customers. Upon account creation, a player immediately has access to safeguards that allow them to set their own deposit and play limits and to self-exclude from participation should they choose. A user has access to their transaction history available to them in their account information. The account history provides detailed information regarding all bets placed, all winnings and losses, and a summary of their play over the last month, three months, year, and lifetime. For the majority of players, legal sports wagering is a form of entertainment, spending less than \$100 per month on the activity.²

DraftKings appreciates the inclusion of problem gaming resources in HB1308, including funding for access to resources for those that need it. In testimony provided earlier this month by the National Council on Problem Gambling, they estimated that just over two percent of the population, or 25,000 residents of Hawaii, may currently have a gambling problem.³ Regulated operators, like DraftKings, provide additional resources for those who need it and we have found that sports wagering has sometimes been a catalyst in other states across the country for them to revamp their responsible gaming tools and resources. Additionally, some sports wagering operators go above and beyond responsible gaming requirements imposed on them by a jurisdiction. For example, at DraftKings, we have a partnership with Kindbridge Behavioral Health to provide access to therapy and treatment for problem gaming in every jurisdiction where DraftKings operates its online sportsbook product.

As the committee considers this bill, we respectfully suggest one amendment that aligns the bill with industry standard language:

² <https://www.newsweek.com/legal-sports-betting-good-thing-heres-why-opinion-1999456>

³ National Council on Problem Gambling, written testimony Feb. 12, 2025, Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/sessions/session2025/Testimony/HB1308_HD1_TESTIMONY_JHA_02-12-25_.PDF



- On Page 1, Lines 8-12, we request that part of the definition of “Adjusted gross sports wagering receipts” be amended as follows:
 - “Adjusted gross sports wagering receipts” means gross sports wagering receipts less the total of all sums actually paid out as winnings to patrons, including the monetary value of any merchandise or thing of value awarded as a prize, and ~~subject to federal income~~ **excise** tax.”
 - The inclusion of “federal excise tax” is a necessary component to the calculation of adjusted gross sports wagering receipts. There is a specific federal excise tax imposed on sports wagering receipts and this language prevents double taxation of an operator’s receipts.

We additionally understand testimony from the Sports Betting Alliance, for which DraftKings is a member, includes other suggested changes to this bill, which we support.

Thank you very much for your time today, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



**Hawaii Senate
Committee on Ways and Means**

Testimony in Support of HB 1308 HD3, SD1

April 2, 2025

Chair Dela Cruz and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1308 HD3, SD1.

My name is Kathleen (Kate) Owen, and I am an attorney with the law firm Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe. I represent the Sports Betting Alliance (“SBA”), and I am submitting this testimony on their behalf. The SBA is a trade organization comprised of many of the top sports betting operators in the country—BetMGM, DraftKings, Fanatics, and FanDuel. Taken together, our membership is active in nearly all of the 33 U.S. jurisdictions¹ with legal online sports betting.

Nearly four-fifths of the states now offer some form of sports betting, which is a remarkable development since sports betting was restricted to only a handful of states prior to 2018. However, the rapid adoption of sports betting by state legislatures since the Supreme Court struck down that restriction comes as no surprise. Allow me to highlight three reasons why.

First, there is a robust illegal sports betting market that thrives in the absence of a legal, regulated framework. The American Gaming Association estimated in 2022 that Americans wager \$63.8 billion dollars each year in the illegal sports betting market²—which works out to nearly \$300 million wagered in Hawaii alone. This money is being wagered with offshore websites and illegal bookies with no oversight, consumer protections, or revenue generated for the state. The illegal and unregulated market continues to grow around the country in states without a legal alternative, and Hawaii is no exception.

Second, sports wagering is offered safely and responsibly by reputable operators in jurisdictions where it is legal. These operators implement robust measures with regard to identity verification,

¹ Thirty-one states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, including Missouri where voters approved legal online sports betting in November 2024, and it is expected to go live later this year.

² *Sizing the Illegal and Unregulated Gaming Markets in the United States*, American Gaming Association, November 2022. Available at americangaming.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Sizing-the-Illegal-and-Unregulated-Gaming-Markets-in-the-US.pdf

consumer protection, responsible gaming, and game integrity that are not present in the illegal market.

Third and finally, states stand to generate significant revenue by putting a regulatory framework in place around this activity. By channeling this activity into the legal market and building a robust and responsible market for sports betting, Hawaii stands to gain millions per year in additional tax revenue. In addition to Hawaii residents, Hawaii welcomes approximately 10 million tourists each year, which will create additional tax revenue potential.

A regulated, competitive mobile sports betting market would replace the predatory, illegal platforms and bookies already operating in Hawaii and generate new revenue for the state through a policy that has the support of constituents. According to a 2022 poll conducted by Anthology Research, 73% of Hawaii residents support legalizing and regulating online sports wagering in Hawaii for adults 21 years of age or older to generate annual tax revenue.³

It is also important to highlight that despite purported studies and news stories to the contrary, the reality is that approximately 97% of individuals gamble responsibly. The vast majority of participants view sports betting as a form of entertainment that enhances their sports viewing experience. And the experts have reached the same conclusion. For example, the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) has found that severe problem gambling affects only an estimated 1% of the population nationwide.⁴ Two states studied their own problem gambling rates after they legalized sports betting and found them to be consistent with those nationwide rates.⁵ One of the states concluded that “[c]onsidering that legal gambling availability has continued to increase both in [the state] and North America more generally beyond the early 2000s, the present fairly low rate of problem gambling illustrates that populations tend to adapt to the presence of legalized gambling over time.”⁶

In their February 12, 2025 testimony on this bill, the NCPG advised that an estimated 2.2% percent of the adult population in Hawaii currently struggles with problem gaming, which is consistent with the relatively static national average as well as the rates found in legal sports betting states, despite the fact that gambling is not legal in Hawaii. This means that the individuals in Hawaii who are currently struggling are doing so in the dangerous illegal market. HB 1308 HD3, SD1 however, includes extensive problem gaming provisions and consumer protections, including a provision requiring a to-be-determined percentage of taxes collected to

³ Specifically, the Anthology Research survey inquired whether participants support this legalization “to generate annual tax revenue which can be used to improve Hawaii schools and to fund other critical priorities for the islands.”

⁴ FAQs: *What is Problem Gambling?*, The National Council on Problem Gaming. Available at <https://www.ncpgambling.org/help-treatment/faqs-what-is-problem-gambling/>

⁵ Connecticut found a problem gaming rate of 1.9% and Indiana a rate of between 1.3-2.3%. *Study: Connecticut Problem Gambling Declines Over Past Three Decades*, SBC Americas, February 22, 2024. Available at <https://sbcamericas.com/2024/02/22/connecticut-study-gambling-residents/>

⁶ *Adult Gambling Behaviors in Indiana 2022*, Prevention Insights at the Indiana University School of Public Health, 2022. Available at https://ipgap.indiana.edu/documents/2022_Adult_Gambling_Behaviors_in_Indiana.pdf?_gl=1*oagzyh*_ga*MTI3NDQwMDk2LjE2O DkwNDM3NDQ.*_ga_61CH0D2DQW*MTY4OTA0Mzc0NC4xLjAuMTY4OTA0Mzc0NC42MC4wLjA.&_ga=2.262835852.146966882.3.1689043745-127440096.1689043744

be deposited into a problem gambling prevention and treatment fund, which will be a benefit to all residents of Hawaii. Additionally, the bill requires that all operators be required to conspicuously display in all advertising for sports wagering the availability of the toll-free helpline “1-800-GAMBLER,” which spreads the message that this resource is open to everyone who needs help.

There have also been allegations that sports betting leads to more violent crime. This is simply not based in fact. We can point to several states, including Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, and New Jersey, that have experienced a *decrease* in violent crime after legal sports betting launched. In fact, based on FBI data, nine out of the ten states with the lowest rate of violent crime have legal and regulated sports betting.⁷

Opponents of legal sports betting have also cited a study finding that unexpected game losses by the home team on a Sunday increase intimate partner violence (“IPV”) more in states where sports betting is legal than in states where sports betting is not legal. But this study suffers from numerous flaws, including the fact that the authors’ reported increase from the baseline is so small and statistically insignificant that it could be driven by randomness and coincidence—showing a purported change in IPV from 4.17 per 1 million people up to 4.21 per 1 million people. This suggests that the study shows minimal correlation at best but certainly not causation between sports betting and violence—the study does not even analyze whether the individuals involved in IPV had placed bets.

Similarly, the assertion that sports betting leads to higher rates of bankruptcies and other markers of financial distress is not based on a sound empirical foundation. Opponents have cited population or state-level surveys that, just like the IPV study, try to ascribe correlation to causation. Notably, these studies—purporting to show higher credit card delinquencies, lower savings, or higher rates of bankruptcy—fail to test or control for external variables and larger macroeconomic factors driving such results, including inflationary and other cost pressures. For example, it is important to note that the timing of legalization of sports betting in many states coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, changes in behavior and personal finances during COVID may be correlated with the timing of the launch of sports betting, leading to biased or overstated results. Critically, none of them determine whether the additional individuals or households that experienced financial distress ever participated in online sports betting—leaving any connection to sports betting speculative and tenuous at most.

The authorization of the legal market removes the stigma that some may feel when struggling with problem gambling in the illegal market and opens an invaluable door for those who need help.⁸ While it is true that call-center traffic often increases when online sports betting is

⁷ *Low Violent Crime*, US News & World Report, accessed on Feb. 22, 2025. Available at https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/rankings/crime-and-corrections/public-safety/violent-crime-rate#google_vignette

⁸ The increased visibility of the 1-800-GAMBLER number that accompanies the entrance of the legal market allows for people whose addiction predates legalization to engage with it, and it can also serve as a resource for people whose gambling problems have nothing to do with sports betting. Robert Williams, Executive Director of the New York State Gaming Commission, emphasized in his 2023 testimony before the New York Senate that the “advertising by mobile sports wagering companies has resulted in

legalized, regulators and experts have cautioned that this does not necessarily correlate to an increase in problem-gaming cases. Rather, many calls are coming in from people seeking information such as winning lottery numbers (in states where the lottery is legal), technology help with apps, or customer service, rather than treatment. The Executive Director of the NCPG has called call volume a “fairly weak predictor of gambling addiction.” The above findings are consistent with rates observed across the U.S., suggesting there is no evidence of a significant increase in problem gambling as a result of legalization.

Finally, we thank the members of the legislature for the robust and productive dialogue around creating a sports wagering framework that fits the unique needs of the state of Hawaii. Accordingly, the SBA respectfully requests the following amendments to the bill, which we believe are consistent with feedback we have received from the legislature and also in the course of our participation in the Working Group.

- On Page 14, Line 5, insert “500,000” in the blank provision regarding initial or renewal sports wagering operator license fees. After additional analysis and discussions with legislators and the Working Group, we propose to double the amount of the five-year-license that was initially proposed in the initial bill draft. With this entire sum paid in year one to cover the five-year period, we believe that this sum will cover the regulatory costs necessary for administering this chapter.
- On Page 15, Line 4, reinsert “250,000” in the blank provision regarding a temporary license fee for operators. Temporary license fees help quickly generate capital for the Department as it gets the full framework established, and it can help to cover initial, one-time costs of setting up the framework within the Department.
- On Page 17, Line 10, insert “20,000” in the blank provision regarding initial or renewal sports wagering supplier license fees. Consistent with the above, we propose to double the amount of the five-year-license that was proposed in the initial bill draft.
- On Page 18, Line 6, reinsert “10,000” in the blank provision regarding a temporary license fee for suppliers.
- Delete Page 26, Line 6 to Page 27, Line 9, and replace it with the language attached hereto at “Exhibit A.”
 - Based on feedback received, we have endeavored to provide updated language regarding establishing a sports betting and problem gambling prevention and treatment special fund.

- We have also proposed language regarding appropriating initial start-up sums to DBEDT to establish the sports betting framework, which would then be repaid to the general fund. The purpose of this appropriation would be to “carry out the purposes of this Act, including the establishment, hiring, and filling of three permanent full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE) positions to carry out the purposes of the sports betting program established pursuant to this Act.”
- In addition to hiring the requisite FTEs to run the program, as set forth in our proposed language, part of this sum may be used to hire a consultant, such as a former regulator from another state, to assist with this set-up process.
- Finally, on Page 1, Lines 8-12, we request that part of the definition of “Adjusted gross sports wagering receipts” be amended as follows:
 - “Adjusted gross sports wagering receipts” means gross sports wagering receipts less the total of all sums actually paid out as winnings to patrons, including the monetary value of any merchandise or thing of value awarded as a prize, and ~~subject to~~ federal ~~income~~ excise tax.”
 - The inclusion of “federal excise tax” is a necessary component to the calculation of adjusted gross sports wagering receipts since the federal government imposes a 0.25% excise tax on the amounts wagered on legal sports betting. Without the inclusion of this provision, sports betting operators would be taxed twice for this same amount.

The SBA supports HB 1308 HD3, SD1 and the framework that it would establish to regulate sports betting in Hawaii. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Exhibit A

§ -12 Sports betting and [P]problem gambling prevention and treatment special fund. (a) There shall be established the sports betting and problem gambling prevention and treatment special fund into which shall be deposited:

(1) Sports wagering operator license fees collected under section -5;

(2) Appropriations by the legislature to the special fund; and

(23) The portion of taxes collected under section -11 for deposit into the problem gambling prevention and treatment special fund.

Any interest and moneys earned on the investments shall be credited to the sports betting and problem gambling prevention and treatment special fund. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, any moneys remaining in the special fund at the end of the biennium shall not revert to the credit of the general fund of the State.

(b) Subject to legislative appropriation, moneys in the sports betting and problem gambling prevention and treatment special fund shall be expended at the discretion of the director of [by] the department for:

(1) Positions and operating costs; and

(2) A prevention and treatment program, including:

(4A) Counseling and other support services for disordered and problem gamers;

(2B) Developing and implementing problem gaming treatment and prevention programs;
and

(3C) Creating and disseminating responsible gaming education and messages.

(3) Any other expenditure necessary, consistent with this chapter to implement a sports betting program.

SECTION . There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$400,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026, and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027, to be deposited into the sports betting and problem gambling prevention and treatment special fund established pursuant to section -12.

SECTION ____ . There is appropriated out of the sports betting and problem gambling prevention and treatment special fund the sum of \$400,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 to carry out the purposes of this Act, including the establishment, hiring, and filling of three permanent full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE) positions to carry out the purposes of the sports betting program established pursuant to this Act.

The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION ____ . Not later than July 1, 2027, the department shall establish a repayment plan and schedule to repay to the general fund, the sums deposited into the sports betting and problem gambling prevention and treatment special fund established pursuant to section -12. The department shall only use moneys from the sports betting and problem gambling prevention and treatment special fund to repay the general fund.

SECTION ____ . For the purposes of effectuating this Act, the personnel hired and the contracts entered into by the department, pursuant to this Act, shall be exempt from chapter 76, Hawaii Revised Statutes, for a period beginning on July 1, 2025, and ending on June 30, 2027; provided that:

(1) All personnel actions taken pursuant to this Act by the department after June 30, 2027, shall be subject to chapter 76, Hawaii Revised Statutes, as appropriate; and

(2) Any employee hired by the department to effectuate this Act, who occupies a position exempt from civil service on July 1, 2027, shall:

(A) Be appointed to a civil service position; and

(B) Not suffer any loss of prior service credit, vacation or sick leave credits previously earned, or other employee benefits or privileges;

provided that the employee possesses the minimum qualifications and public employment requirements for the class or position to which appointed; provided further that subsequent changes in status shall be made pursuant to applicable civil service and compensation laws.



Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Committee on Ways and Means

Wednesday, April 2, 2025; 10:01 a.m.
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

RE: HB 1308 HD3 SD1 – Relating to Sports Wagering – In Opposition

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committees:

Boyd Gaming appreciates the opportunity to provide written testimony in opposition to HB 1308 HD3 SD1, which would allow for the regulation of online sports wagering by the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT).

Founded in 1975, Boyd Gaming is now a nationwide gaming company operating 28 casinos in 11 states, and has a presence in 19 distinct markets including our online presence in online gaming and sports wagering. Our perspective that we are sharing with you today has been shaped by 50 years of experience in the gaming industry, operating in all facets of gaming including brick-and-mortar casinos, sports wagering, online real money and social gaming, among others.

Our Company has strong ties to Hawai'i, as the state and its residents were a critical component of Boyd's foundational beginnings and continue to be an important part of the Company's success today. Boyd Gaming also owns and operates Vacations Hawaii, which has served over 1.5 million Hawai'i residents with convenient and affordable direct flights to Las Vegas since 1996. Vacations Hawaii is proud to be an established part of Hawai'i's local history, community and economy with employees based in both Hawai'i and in Las Vegas.

While sports wagering is an important component of an overall gaming policy framework, taken alone it is not a significant source of tax revenue and creates few jobs. Many other states in comparable sized markets to Hawai'i that have passed isolated sports wagering legislation have been disappointed in the outcome—tax revenues from online sports wagering are often less than anticipated, and the revenues are usually not sufficient to fund or sustain regulatory and enforcement oversight and a responsible gaming infrastructure, crucial components of any gaming framework. In states of similar size and comparable population to Hawai'i that have implemented online sports wagering, the costs of implementation, operation and regulation ranges between \$3 to \$5 million per year. Consequently, if online sports wagering is passed without the state fully understanding the financial impacts, legalization of online sports wagering could actually cost the state money rather than generating additional revenue for Hawai'i.

With no underlying public policy objective, Boyd Gaming believes that HB 1308 HD3 SD1 is too limited, restrictive and premature. The State would be better suited toward a public policy that can serve as a catalyst of economic activity, employment, investment, and tax revenue.

As a result, we prefer SCR 121, which requests the Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) to establish a Tourism and Gaming Working Group to develop a comprehensive tourism gaming framework. We believe that SCR 121 is an appropriate first step for the Legislature to take before passing any gaming policy legislation. Given that Hawai'i currently does not have any form of legalized gaming, the state has a unique opportunity to create a comprehensive gaming policy framework that is specifically tailored to Hawai'i's unique culture and tourism economy. The data, information and analysis done by the working group will be critical to help shape public policy for the Legislature to consider that will serve as a catalyst of economic growth, job creation, capital investment, and state and local tax revenue. Any gaming policy considered in Hawai'i should be complementary and additive to Hawai'i's existing robust tourism and hospitality industry. However, if done correctly, the main focus of gaming policy should not be solely to authorize gaming, but drive significant private capital investment to build upon and enhance Hawai'i's existing tourism infrastructure while supporting local priorities. The working group established by SCR 121 would allow for sufficient time, information and expertise to establish a comprehensive tourism framework for consideration by the Legislature to best position Hawai'i to take advantage of the intersection of tourism, sports, entertainment and gaming as part of the state's own "Fun Economy."

Boyd Gaming respectfully requests that the Committee defer this measure because of the reasons stated above. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this measure.



The Institute for Human Services, Inc.
Ending the Cycle of Homelessness

LATE

TO: Honorable Senator Donovan Dela Cruz,
Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Honorable Senator Sharon Moriwaki
Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Connie Mitchell, Executive Director
IHS, Institute for Human Services, Inc.

RE: HB1308 HD3 SD1 - RELATING TO SPORTS WAGERING.

DATE: April 1, 2025

POSITION: IHS opposes the passing of HB1308 HD3 SD1

IHS, The Institute for Human Services, opposes the passing of HB1308 HD3 SD1.

As a homeless service provider, we often see the result of a combination of economic desperation made worse when compounded by an addiction to gambling. We've seen life savings go up in smoke impacting whole families and chronic gambling in game rooms that deplete monthly incomes in quick time. The children are the innocent victims in these cases.

Per ALICE's recent report, 1 in 2 households with one child or more are likely to live below the ALICE threshold. Moreover, if you're under the age of 35 you're 53% likely to live below the ALICE threshold, meaning you're likely living paycheck to paycheck, unprepared for unexpected costs or loss of income. By legalizing a highly addictive activity, we are increasing the likelihood of addiction and its adverse income and societal effects, including mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, and even suicide. We already live in an addictive environment with increasing screen time with social and digital media, which bombard us with 'opportunities' to buy and gain to "improve our lives." Passing this bill would invite more false promises of financial gain. Even when the wagers are small or for innocuous offers, they add up over time, creating behaviors that often lead to financial instability.

By passing this bill, we're permitting a harmful and addictive avenue for Hawai'i households to enter the cycle of poverty. Gambling is rarely net-neutral in its effects. The only winners in gambling are predatory businesses, while families, nonprofits and government agencies bear the social and economic consequences of the poor and dejected.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 8:21:21 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacob Wiencek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

I am glad to see this bill continue to advance through the legislative process. I believe sports betting will economically help Hawaii. I urge the Committee to SUPPORT this bill!

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 2:46:35 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Miyata	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am opposed to HB 1308. My dad started with sports gambling and he got addicted and we lost our home. Gambling will bring more crime and sexual imorality, We don't need money from this unhealthy habit.

Thank you for caring about the safe and wholesome futue of our keiki in Hawaii.

Mahalo,

Linda

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 6:06:42 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Rzonca	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose HB1308 and implore you to vote no. This bill would open the door to more gambling in various ways in Hawaii. Gambling addiction will destroy families, increase homelessness, increase domestic violence & abuse, and add undue stress on HPD. I speak from 1st hand experience.

This also opens a whole new can of worms like cyber security, underage gamblers, and invites bad actors to Hawaii. We are not equipped to handle everything this bill brings to our state.

please vote NO

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 6:24:10 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ulpiano Almazan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We need this in Hawaii, so that it will support are education and needs for living here ! It's entertainment ! Everyone watches NFL,NBA, and others sports that has betting. Why go to Vegas , to play sport betting . This may help Tourism !
At least will it hurt to try !!!

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 6:11:24 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nathan Nazareno	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a stolen state of Hawaii we shouldn't be held back from sports betting as the other states are able to have such recreations.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 5:27:35 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yvonne Keahi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Sports betting is already happening in Hawaii, but offshore sites are taking the money and providing no protections. Wouldn't you rather we regulate it and keep that tax revenue here at home?

73% of Hawaii residents support legalizing sports betting because it would be a reliable revenue stream that addresses our state's rising cost of living and helps fund important projects like affordable housing.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 6:02:13 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Les Tummons	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

One strong reason for Hawai'i to legalize online gambling is the potential for significant economic benefits. By regulating and taxing online gambling, the state could generate substantial revenue that could be used to fund public services such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure.

Since Hawai'i does not have a state lottery or legal casinos, residents who want to gamble often travel to other states or use offshore gambling sites, which provide no economic benefit to Hawai'i. Legalizing online gambling would keep that money within the state, create new jobs in tech and customer service sectors, and help regulate an industry that is currently operating without oversight.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 6:28:31 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matthew Kaai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. I'm a born and raised Kanaka, and as you all know, we love to gamble. 10s of thousands of locals fly to Vegas every year, just to gamble.. but that's nothing new. I can honestly say that I know of at least 30 people that activity bet on sports here in Hawaii year round. They bet on everything from soccer, to hockey, tennis, and even badminton, as well as the popular sports like football, baseball, and basketball. Ill get straight to the point. Keep the money in our state and let the state collect the millions of dollars that's lost every year to these illegal "houses" that take a great advantage in sports betting by manipulating the numbers and taking away certain betting strategies from the average guy like me. Again, keep the money in Hawaii! No matter what laws arise, illegal gambling will NEVER STOP IN HAWAII!!! With gaming being online, it's impossible to stop. The money generated off losing bets would be astronomical and would blow your minds, lawmakers. There are people here that bet as big as 200-500k on 1 sporting event. Let that number sink in for a minute. Things like our infrastructure or schools, the RAIL!! could be so much better, or finished!!. Let that sink in too. No disrespect intended. Aloha

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 6:16:29 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keith Kawai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in favor of allowing sports betting in Hawaii.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 6:21:03 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jonathan Martin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It makes sense to allow online Sports gambling in Hawai'i. it will bring in a new revenue stream for systems in Hawai'i that desperately need help.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 6:24:59 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
dansen carvalho jr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Sports betting, especially remote or online betting should be legalized as I do not see it raising any crime rates, or violence, drug use here. A casino would be a different story but simply placing bets online should be legal, as almost anywhere else, it is legal, takes no footprint to do here, and will allow for endless opportunity for both parties, amongst memories with one another.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 6:13:57 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Todd Nakamura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support HB 1308. I believe the State of Hawai‘i can realize funds that are currently being sent outside the State, and even outside the Country. I believe people are already participating in online sports gambling via various methods to get around the current laws, so by legalizing it, the State can get the moneys currently being sent outside. I truly believe various improvements to things like infrastructure can be done with the money the State can make from this bill passing.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 7:44:05 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Smith Cobb-Adams	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this bill. It is ridiculous that Hawaii is only one of two states that don't have any form of legalized gambling. The tax raised would be beneficial to all residents.
please pass this bill

Mahalo

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 6:55:56 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doreen Morimoto	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill as it is very damaging to people that are led on to the believe they can win monies. This type of entertainment begins with fun and games, but leads to a gambling addiction.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 6:07:44 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Chan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of legalizing online sports gambling in the State of Hawaii.

The state tax revenue is an incredible opportunity for our state. We are limited in our ability to create tax revenue, aside from our high state tax (2nd highest in the country), and this bill will allow our state to introduce a new stream of revenue for the state. For example, in 2023, New York State took in \$800 million in tax revenue from sports betting alone. For the USA (38 states participating in online sports gambling), the industry created \$1.8 billion in tax revenue for these states. I believe this is simply an opportunity the state of Hawaii can not pass up.

On a social level, citizens of Hawaii are well know for their love of the 9th island, Las Vegas. Legalizing online sports gambling would appeal to the many individuals who enjoy betting in a safe and legal manner. As opposed to the many illegal operations going on throughout the state. With a legal option for bettors, I believe we will see a downturn in illegal activity.

Furthermore, the tax revenue generated could be used to combat illegal operations, as well as provide helpful treatment for addicted and troubled individuals that I know are a concern to some of the representatives of the state.

Mahalo for your consideration

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 4:50:14 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jean Toyama	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Here we go again, the gamblers are at it once more. First sports betting, then what? Is any kind of gambling healthy for Hawaii? We have a notable history for gambling from plantation times and continues today with constant travel to Las Vegas. Many people in Hawaii love to gamble. Let it be done where it belongs, not in our homes.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 2:29:17 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mandy Chang	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Sports wagering has become a crisis in our Nation. It is undermining the beauty and joy of healthy competition and skewing the goal of athletic endeavors. It is adding to addiction, family and financial hardship and brokenness. Hawaii is built on strong families, cultural values, and community well-being. Legalizing sports wagering undermines these values and puts our most vulnerable at risk.

For too long in this State we have dabbled with looking at methods of revenue that would also bring increasing crime, addiction, and generational brokenness. Bottom line: sports betting leads to gambling and to crime. Our island has been inundated with crime in the last few years and our fine men and women serving and sacrificing on our police force are still short around 400 personnel. Could we please stop turning to alternatives that seem to offer a quick financial fix but in reality only add to the uphill battle we are already facing for the health and safety of our islands! Where is our Aloha? What happened to the life of the land being perpetuated in righteousness?

With all our bright minds I am confident that other sources of revenue can be utilized and that we can reduce waste to help our communities thrive again. I hope that as you look at all the information, you will prioritize long term, generational, safety of individuals and families.

Legalized sports betting can lead to an increase in gambling addiction, which can have serious financial and personal consequences.

I am asking you to vote NO on HB1308 HD3 SD1.

Thank you,

Amanda Chang

Kapolei, HI

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 6:07:00 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kerry Ishihara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in favor of SB 1308. In this day and age where numerous states have legalized sports betting, it would be advantageous for Hawaii to be able to benefit by regulating and being able to generate income from legalization.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 1:27:51 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keith Vincent	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I believe this bill will generate a lot of revenue and employment that will benefit all of Hawaii

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 10:54:10 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Newberg	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

no to sports betting - it is not good for families

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 9:20:07 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark Low	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Sports betting is already happening in Hawaii, but offshore sites are taking the money and providing no protections.

I myself spend several thousand dollars sports wagering when traveling to Nevada EVERY YEAR. I know at least 25 other people that do so as well.

Wouldn't you rather we regulate it and keep that tax revenue here at home? It makes so much sense...and I hope that the Hawaii legislature will finally see the light that they are losing EASY and valuable tax dollars to Nevada and offshore sites too.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 6:08:06 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tony Leung	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support legalization of sports gambling in the state of Hawaii. It is universally accepted we are behind the curve. Our state is always a follower never the lead. That needs to change. I am in full support of HB1308.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 6:58:55 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ken Fuller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 1308, not as a gambler but as a resident of Hawaii that has see, first hand, the problems associated with illegal gaming. Whether it's a Pepito or craps game at an illegal chicken fight or an elaborate game room . These illegal events draw in further illegal activity including drugs and violence. Back when I moved to Hawaii in 1992, it was common to have bookmakers on each job site, factory, dock, warehouse and even office. This is still in practice today. Legalizing bookmaking in a controlled environment and taxed much the same as the UK or the mainland would be a good tax base and clean up the illegal aspect of this form of gambling. I know the silent majority in Hawaii supports this as should Legislatures in Hawaii. Aloha

Respectfully Submitted

Ken Fuller

Pawa'a, Honolulu

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 6:22:08 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nikos Leverenz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, & WAM Committee:

I write in strong support of HB 1308, HD 3, SD 1, which would authorize online sports wagering.

30 states currently have live online sports wagering, with Missouri soon to join them.

Unlike casino operations or illicit game rooms, which have significant neighborhood impacts that can include violence and other disruptions to residential neighborhoods, online sports wagering is conducted through a smart phone or desktop.

Online sports wagering will take a good deal of those funds currently dedicated to illicit gaming and provide more tax revenue needed for ongoing public spending priorities.

While some on the continent have been negatively impacted by sports wagering, as a general matter adults should be free to make decisions about their financial resources, including entertainment options that they find to be suitable.

Those who are opposed to sports wagering need not participate. Opponents, including those who are aligned with or are a component of the criminal legal system, should not have the summary authority to dictate the choices available to adults when such choices do not pose a threat to them or to the communities that we inhabit.

Policymakers might want to consider prohibiting wagers on Hawaii-based athletic teams, with some University of Hawaii contests already garnering disproportionate handles as noted in a *Washington Post* [article](#) last year. UH should be able to use this data to secure more lucrative broadcast arrangements in the coming months and increase its ability to attract and retain athletic talent through larger NIL agreements.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 10:32:28 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynn Murakami Akatsuka	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose HB 1308, HD 3, SD 1 passage and ask that it be deferred. Sports wagering is not the way to increase revenue for Hawai'i. There are more negative consequences for our residents and our communities. I read the state agencies' testimonies and there are cautions expressed on this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity for submitting testimony in strong opposition to HB 1308, HD 3, SD 1.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 9:31:45 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
TJ Rickard	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Why not create extra tax revenue for the people of Hawaii from something that's already going on illegally?

Makes no sense for online sports betting not to be legalized, as its legal in every other state besides Hawaii and Utah. Be innovative and make Hawaii a viable place to live and visit.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 10:23:11 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Seth Kamemoto	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

EDT/CPN's Committee Report on DCCA's recent testimony says it all: "stating that sports wagering, due to its inherent risk for consumers, including the potential for gambling addiction, financial hardship, and related social[sic] issues, may conflict with the Department's existing mandate to protect consumers". So it's well-known that inherent risks exist, and the sports wagering business itself is addictive and potentially dangerous to consumers.

It's silly to attempt to "[decrease] predatory illegal activity" when the activity itself is highly predatory. If the only reason for predatory behavior was the fact that an activity was illegal and unregulated, then a case could be made that legalizing such an activity would make it safer and less predatory. That's just not true for gambling, since the activity itself is highly predatory, essentially by design.

Legalizing sports wagering would make the marketing of sports betting sites legal; this alone has the potential to be very dangerous, especially to children and teens. Even if the regulated market worked perfectly and protected 100% of our children and teens from actually participating in sports wagering, the legal marketing blitz that would come from such legalization would expose our impressionable children and teens to potentially harmful messaging that promotes addictive gambling behavior.

If the current sports wagering landscape is so dangerous to the public's health and safety today, we should work to curb and curtail it, not legalize it and allow it to proliferate further. And it's insidious to attempt to legalize such an addictive activity just to join in on the take (from the proposed "sin" tax), as such taxes tend to be highly regressive, penalizing our most vulnerable families the most. Our laws should be part of the solution, and not part of expanding and profiting from the problem.

Thank you for your consideration,
Seth Kamemoto

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 5:17:27 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kenneth M Ticman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the bill to legalize sports betting in Hawaii cause the state could really use the billions of dollars of revenue instead of it going somewhere else.

March 30, 2025

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Noel Morin. I oppose HB 1308 HD3 SD1, which *Allows for the regulation of sports wagering by the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs. Establishes licensing requirements for sports wagering operators and sports wagering suppliers. Specifies that legal sports wagering and fantasy sports contests shall not be considered contests of chance or gambling.*

I oppose **HB1308 HD3 SD1**, which seeks to establish legalized gambling in Hawaii. Despite the suggestion that legalized gambling can provide the state with economic benefits, the reality is that the social and economic costs far outweigh any potential revenue gains.

There is ample evidence that gambling results in financial hardships, mental health issues, and family breakdowns. We've heard stories (perhaps that of family and community members) who have destroyed their financial health because of gambling. We only need to look at states where gambling has led to bankruptcies and an overburdened social support system.

Justifying legalization of gambling because it is already occurring is very problematic, especially given the many societal costs associated with gambling. Instead of furthering the activity, we should invest in corrective measures.

There are more sustainable approaches to generating revenue, ones that align with our values and avoid social harm. Let's focus on strategies that strengthen the well-being of our communities.

I urge you to reject **HB1308 HD3 SD1**.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Noel Morin
Hilo, Hawaii

Resources:

- pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4795333/
- atlanticbehavioralhealth.com/consequences-of-gambling-addiction-impacts-and-recovery
- www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK230628
- today.ucsf.edu/story/legalized-gambling-increases-irresponsible-betting-behavior-especially-among-low-income-populations
- sbmediashowcase.com/2433/studies/how-sports-gambling-presence-through-social-media-has-impacted-our-society



13 minute episode explaining sports gambling issue
youtu.be/vDsLuOCWcck?si=HqkeHf-6lwuJqAsq

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 6:10:50 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
david ainoa jr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support any betting in Hawaii , including casino gambling

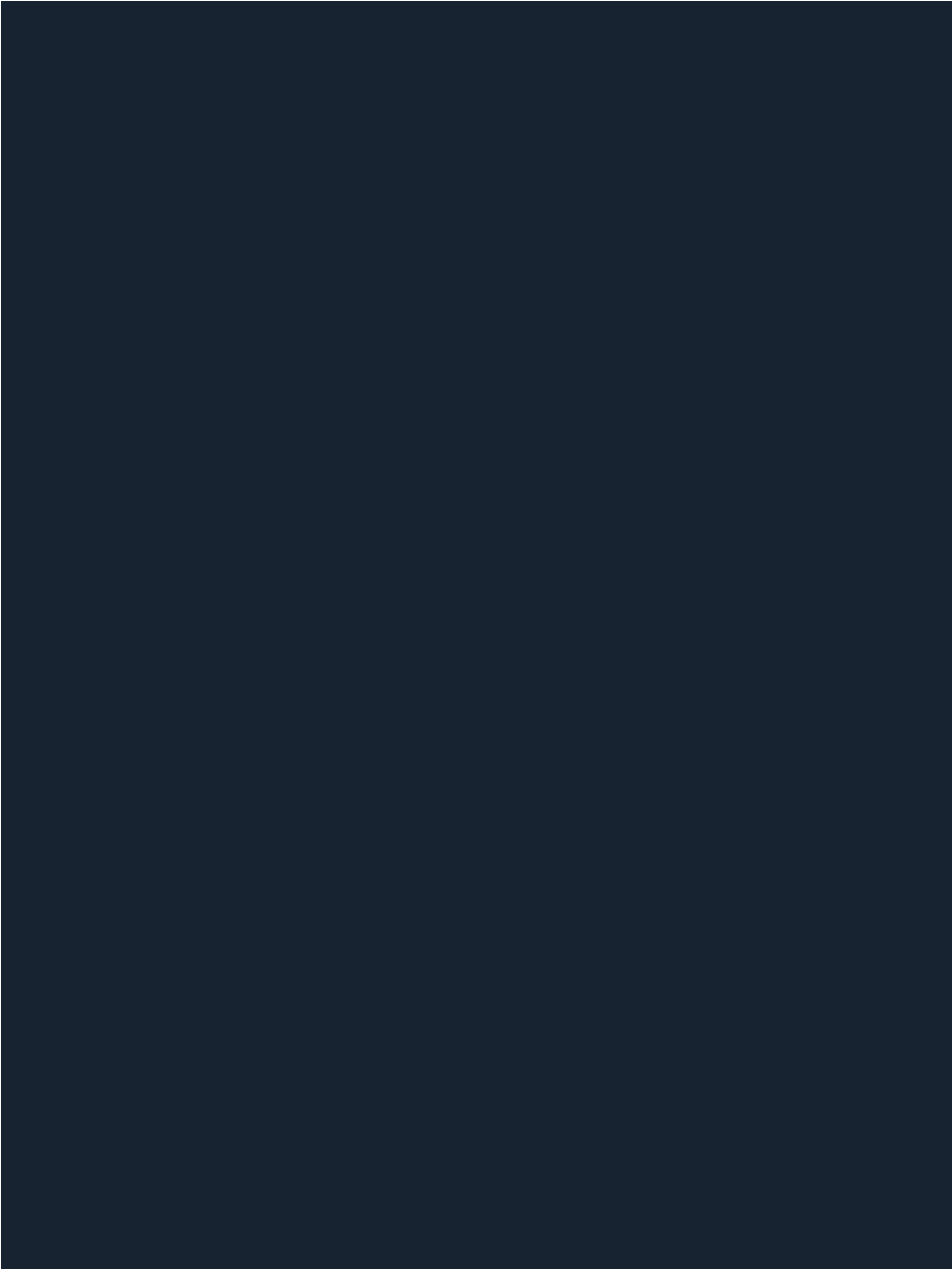
HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 7:37:27 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
neil nakamura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:



neil, we are so close to legalizing sports betting in Hawaii! But we need your help to get us over the finish line. Since YOU helped get legal sports betting through the Hawaii House of Representatives, it's on its way to the Senate.

This is your LAST CHANCE to speak out in support of sports betting. Will you take 5 minutes to submit a comment?

Submitting a comment is quick and easy. Just follow the below steps:

1. Log in or register an account with [Hawaii.gov](https://hawaii.gov)
2. Click on "Submit Testimony"
3. Under "Enter Bill or Measure" put **HB1308**
4. Type your First and Last name
5. Under "Your position on HB1308" click **Support**
6. Under "Testifying" click **As an individual citizen**
7. Under will you be testifying click your preferred method
8. Submit your testimony!

Wondering what you should say? Don't worry, we've got you covered:

Sports betting is already happening in Hawaii, but offshore sites are taking the money and providing no protection for our residents.

[Submit a comment](#)

73% of Hawaii residents support legalizing sports betting because it would be a reliable revenue stream that adds to the state's budget.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 5:35:28 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
DENNIS PERRY	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

1

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 1:50:24 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael EKM Olderr	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I don't approve of this bill. The Sports wagering industry is predatory; corrupt interest is only interested in exploiting the addiction of vulnerable people. We should not be encouraging them, and it would be disastrous for everyone in the state if we were to give sports wagering more room here in Hawaii. I hope you oppose this bill

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 1:08:14 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Neil Frazer	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and Committee Members,

I'm strongly opposed to this bill, based on science. For example, [Baker et al. \(2024\)](#) find that that legalization of online sports betting decreases household saving, decreases investment with positive expected outcomes, and increases financial distress. In other words, legalization of sports betting will increase financial precarity in Hawaii. We have more than enough financial precarity already.

In case you are wondering, I am not especially conservative. For example, although I have never been a user, I look forward to the time when we can legalize marijuana. Hawaii's climate is perfect for marijuana cultivation all year round, and marijuana is light enough to ship inexpensively by air. Habitual marijuana use can be harmful to the developing adolescent brain, so it should be regulated and taxed, like tobacco and alcohol, with part of the proceeds used for education.

Mahalo for your unselfish service to Hawaii.

[Neil Frazer, PhD](#)

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 1:43:22 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
missy	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose HB1308 to legalize online sports gambling. Hawai'i families are already struggling—why legalize a highly addictive, financially destructive industry that will tear families down instead of build them up? The only winners in gambling are billion-dollar corporations, while families, nonprofits and government agencies bear the social and economic consequences of the broke and broken. Let's prioritize our people and values over profits and predatory industries.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 3:20:41 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Wong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I believe that we can save, and make a lot of money by legalizing some sort of a chance at recreational money making games. There are a lot of ways of having a chance at becoming financially stabilized. With responsible and knowledgeable means also being available when help is needed. And I believe that the people/tax payers of Hawaii has the right and deserves the chance to make a vote on this matter. If you deny them this chance, then you are also the cause of all of our problems. Mahalo!

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 3:38:43 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
daryl matsuo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please legalize Sports betting. a lottery and Bingo Parlors.

OPPOSE sports gambling - HB1308

March 31, 2025

Elected leaders:

Vote NO to sports wagering. It's ridiculous to make the argument that we should legalize sports betting because illegal sports betting already exists here. Should we make the same case for prostitution? Do we want Hawaii to become the next Vegas?

There's only one outcome for legalizing sports gambling:

Multi-billion dollar corporations = WINNERS

People of Hawaii, aka future gambling addicts = generations of LOSERS

Representatives of and for the people, I strongly urge you to oppose HB1308.

If we compromise our morals and values for short term gains and don't consider the long term consequences, then we are FOOLS and deserve what will befall us. There's a reason why they say money is the root of all evil.

Mahalo,

John Otto

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 3:43:33 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ellen Godbey Carson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose any legalizing gambling in Hawai'i. Gambling's social harms outweigh any benefits it would bring. Gambling disproportionately harms those who can least afford the unreasonable financial risks associated with gambling.

Gambling would create more social ills and addictions that we don't need.

Ellen Carson

Honolulu, Hawaii

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 3:44:08 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rita Kama-Kimura	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am asking you to please vote “No” do not pass this bill HB1308 HD2 regarding Sports Wagering.

Any kind of gambling, no matter how innocent it may appear ... it never ever is. Like Pandora’s box, open it and you never know what else is to follow, remember our children are watching, will learn and be affected by what yOu do today. Again I ask you to please do not pass this bill.

Will Caron
Testimony in Opposition to HB1308
Senate Ways & Means Committee
Monday, March 31, 2025

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means.

I am testifying in strong opposition to House Bill 1308, which would legalize online sports betting in Hawai'i. From a socioeconomic perspective, I consider this to be one of the most dangerous bills this legislative session.

Of all the various kinds of gambling that exist, sports betting using mobile applications is the most dangerous and damaging kind of gambling. While most forms of traditional gambling are time and location dependent, the constant accessibility of online sports betting enables the addictive and self-destructive behavior at all times. Legalizing online sports betting means putting the most addictive behavior (gambling) on the most addictive device (smart phones).

Unsurprisingly, the rise of online sports betting has been found to correlate with rising gambling harms. [One study](#) shows that, in states that allowed online sports betting, there was a 28 percent increase in bankruptcies, translating to about 100,000 extra bankruptcies a year. People's lives are completely destroyed by this industry, and the effects ripple outward into the community in the form of increased poverty, homelessness, drug abuse, street crime and mental health crises.

If you are in favor of combating poverty and homelessness, drug abuse and street crime, and if you want to end the mental health epidemic in our community, *then you must be against online sport betting.*

Even studies funded by the gaming industry show that about 1 percent of U.S. adults have a severe gambling problem and 2–3 percent have a mild or moderate problem. Those might feel like small percentages, but it's worth remembering that it amounts to somewhere between 3.7–10.4 *million* people in the United States.

This is not some tragic “side effect” of this industry: it is baked into the business model. The people who lose the most money gambling are the lifeblood of these online sports betting apps. An estimated [86 percent of online gambling profits come from just 5 percent of the gamblers](#). The gambling industry business model, whether it's state lotteries, regional casinos or online gambling operators, is based on the addicted gambler. “[The purpose of the industry is to get you to play to extinction, and that means until all your money is gone](#),” according to MIT researcher Natasha Schull.

Betting until all your money's gone is way too easy to do when the casino is literally inside your pocket. Making sport gambling available through apps on a smartphone has fundamentally changed the nature of betting.

Traditionally, sports betting was limited to betting on who would win, how many points the team would score, and who would cover the spread. In-game betting now allows the user to bet *throughout* the game. Opportunities to place new wagers are advertised the whole game long, which keeps users thinking about betting and involved in betting throughout the game. If your bet loses mid game, then you're pitched another bet to try to recoup your losses. Users are constantly nudged to bet on anything and everything.

Betting apps also heavily push more complicated types of bets to customers, like “parlays” where multiple different things all have to happen for a bet to pay off. *People* love parlays because there is a chance they might pay off huge. *Companies* love parlays because they generally don't. Experienced gamblers actually call parlays “sucker bets” because of just how seldom they pay off. In fact, one study of three states with legalized gambling found that, while parlays made up just over a quarter of all money wagered, [they make up over half of these companies' revenue](#).

What that means is that ordinary people are getting exposed to extreme levels of gambling they might never have otherwise encountered.

Gambling sites also offer “free money” if you sign up, though the fine print can be incredibly predatory. [A lawsuit in Massachusetts alleges](#) that a DraftKings offer of \$1,000 bonus was only redeemable if a customer were to deposit *five times* that amount, and then within 90 days place *\$25,000 in bets*.

There are also apps designed specifically to hook young gamblers. Some states don't allow people to sign up for sports books until they are 21, but some apps like “Fliff” use a fake currency that you *turn back into cash if you win*, to get around these laws. Fliff advertises as free to play, but provides in-game opportunities to *buy* Fliff coins and potentially win cash. It's a sweepstakes model that skirts most state gambling regulations which have an age limit.

So “not gambling”—just free-to-play sweepstakes with microtransactions that pay out real cash if you win, available to teens when their brains are the most impressionable. *This is a recipe for creating a whole generation of addicts*.

These companies will then turbocharge that addictive behavior by throwing perks at big spenders, or by [matching them up with a VIP host](#)—a contact who will track their habits, interests and spending in real time and reach out with opportunities to bet more money. They'll also give out tickets to sporting events and send gifts.

Multiple lawsuits have sprung up as a result of these practices. One woman that sued DraftKings alleges [its VIP tactics led her to lose about \\$153,000 in four months](#). Even as she

was realizing how deep in trouble she was getting, DraftKings was sending her perks like tickets to a Steelers game.

Despite her best efforts, she didn't manage to stop using that app. According to her lawsuit, at one point she realized she was about to miss a mortgage payment and emailed her VIP host to ask if DraftKings gave out loans for that sort of thing, saying this "probably means I need to quit gambling soon." The VIP host initially wrote back saying "I want to check in with you are you still playing within your means/budget," but when she didn't reply over the next week, DraftKings allegedly sent six emails with enticements to gamble. She says when she finally sent her host a one-sentence reply reading "I am playing within my means," he sent her \$250 in credit to "get you back in action."

It's not like these sites can't stop someone from gambling, or slow them down if they want to. It is widely known that many U.S. sports book operators boost profits by weeding out winning customers. The data collection that lets these companies weed out successful customers could presumably help them identify those with addiction problems and direct them to help. They know their user's gambling habits, what types of bets they make, and they know how many deposits a person is making into their betting account in a year. These gambling companies know when we're at our most vulnerable and impetuous, and they capitalize on those moments to prey on us.

The influence of these companies on sports now is undeniable. It's not just the ads and the logos of these companies on the field or the uniforms: There are now sports booking facilities built right into the venues. QR codes are displayed on scoreboards that allow people to make instant bets on the next play without leaving the seat.

Sports betting is also completely changing our relationship to the sports that we are watching, which is not lost on athletes who can get a lot of gambling-related abuse online. NBA player Tyrese Haliburton said during [an on-air interview](#): "I mean if I were to look at my mentions right now I'm sure the majority of them are about me f*cking up somebody's parlay."

It's not just professionals that are exposed to online hate related to the gambling industry. Universities are now partnering with betting companies in exchange for millions of dollars, opening up their student athletes to some absolutely atrocious abuse. It's much harder for student athletes to deal with harassment that may be coming from their own classmates than for pros getting anonymous hate online.

In Ohio, there have been [reports](#) of athletes getting venmo requests from their peers when they lost a game or didn't make a free throw, and others have received threats, such as "you deserve to get unalived for blowing my bet" and "I hope your dog gets cancer."

Every single part of this system is set up to reel gamblers in, and then keep them playing. The whole sports ecosystem is suffused with it, from the ads to the games themselves. Just about everyone in the sports world, from journalists to student athletes and everyone in between, has

become compromised by an industry that is able to prey on its most vulnerable customers with *incredible* precision.

The only real beneficiaries of this system are wealthy, powerful companies and individuals. The 2018 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that struck down a federal law in order to leave it up to each state whether to legalize sports betting has opened the floodgates for sports betting companies to mount heavy lobbying efforts. Now 38 states have now legalized sports gambling. As a result, between 2018 and 2023 nearly \$300 billion was wagered on sports gambling markets. The eye-watering profits of these sports betting companies allowed them to spend over \$430 million on national TV ads in 2024 to expand their influence even further.

This is a predatory industry, making massive profits off the suffering of vulnerable people who have been manipulated by the industry into becoming addicts.

Legalizing online sports betting is antithetical to Hawai'i values of looking out for one another and ensuring no one is taken advantage of and left out on the streets. The host of social ills that will accompany this bill if it is passed are terrifying. Responsible lawmakers will kill this bill this year, and each year that it comes up in the future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 3:59:13 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
noel kent	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please vote "no" on legalizing gambling in Hawai'i. This bill will result in more broken homes, more violence in families and between citizens, more bankruptcies, more social dissension.

It can have no good end and will further strain our already strained social structure at a very precarious time. We do not need legalized gambling in our state. Mahalo. Noel Kent

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 5:53:15 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
J Wong	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose HB1308 to legalize online sports gambling. Hawai'i families are already struggling—why legalize a highly addictive, financially destructive industry that will tear families down instead of build them up? The only winners in gambling are billion-dollar corporations, while families, nonprofits and government agencies bear the social and economic consequences of the broke and broken. Let's prioritize our people and values over profits and predatory industries.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 6:48:38 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephen H. Yuen	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Name: Stephen Yuen

Email: stevey@g70.design

Cell ph 808 341-6597

Zip 96816

Representing SELF

I wish to provide WRITTEN TESTIMONY

31mar2025

Written Testimony in OPPOSITION to HB1308

I am submitting written testimony in opposition to HB1308

I strongly oppose HB1308 to legalize online sports gambling. Hawai'i families are already struggling—why legalize a highly addictive, financially destructive industry that will tear families down instead of build them up, and provide increased risks for young adults? The only winners in gambling are billion-dollar corporations, while families, nonprofits and government agencies bear the social and economic consequences of the broke and broken. Let's prioritize our people and values over profits and predatory industries

Before turning to the gambling industry, lets look at more sustainable sources of economic development and revenue.

I am happy to discuss issues and recommendations further if interested.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 7:12:08 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Torie Nakata-Nagao	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly OPPOSE HB1308 to legalize online sports gambling. Hawai'i families are already struggling—why legalize a highly addictive, financially destructive industry that will tear families down instead of build them up? The only winners in gambling are billion-dollar corporations, while families, nonprofits and government agencies bear the social and economic consequences of the broke and broken. Let's prioritize our people and values over profits and predatory industries.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 7:24:11 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dave Watase	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I oppose HB1308 HD3 SD1. Let's not sell our people and children of Hawaii a false sense of hope by legalizing sports wagering of any kind and any means because it is a contest of chance. Las Vegas and all the glamour is funded by the odds being in the favor of the house which equates to a losing outcome to the players.. This type of gambling primarily attracts the younger generations as something cool and fun. However, it can become addictive and trap those seeking to defy the odds for a quick way to hit it big.

You should know this is a bad idea when the bill has to incorporate counter measures for the negative effects that gambling will cause to our society, The cost to our people especially the lower income and vulnerable surely outweigh the benefits. I've lived here my whole life. Please oppose HB1308 HD3 SD1.

Mahalo, Dave Watase (registered voter age 65)

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 7:25:34 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Matson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STOP !! THINK !!!

THINK about the corruptive ramifications and direct degenerative consequences of introducing and passing this unsavory bill to influence the most vulneranble poeple in our State.

- The MULTI-BILLION-dollar gambling industry is aggressively targeting Hawai‘i.
- There are at least 13 registered lobbyists in the state who are working to push this bill through, including Boyd Gaming and DraftKings with 5 Hawaii lobbyists each.
 - Clearly, once sports gambling is legalized in Hawaii, casinos and other forms of gambling will soon mount their forces to follow. Alarmingly - as history reveals - the state will become financially dependent on an industry that profits from addiction and loss.
- Feigning sports-betting gambling as legal gambling in this form WILL NOT eliminate or mitigate illegal gambling in Hawaii. States that have legalized online betting suffer from underground markets that thrive by offering optimistic odds and tax-free winnings.
- Measures that legalize and normalize gambling make addictive gambling more accessible and marketable, not less, which expands the addictive harmfulness of gambling rather than containing it.
- The crime-laden gambling industry spent over \$400 million on Hawaii ads in 2024 with non-stop advertising, celebrity endorsements, and flashy promotions. Their objective is for addictive online gambling to become an everyday activity, drawing in more players to include young and first-time gamblers who never would have bet otherwise.
- Online gambling is THE MOST ADDICTIVE form of gambling. Pairing gambling with smartphone dependency, AI-driven targeting, and 24/7 access creates a supercharged form of exploitation and addiction.
- Regulation acquiescing to online gambling will not stop or divert these predatory practices. Legalized sportsbooks use manipulative tactics like risk-free bets, data tracking, targeted ads, and VIP hosts to keep users hooked.
- The social consequences are devastating. Gambling addiction is as destructive as drug addiction, increasing rates of crime, bankruptcy, domestic violence, divorce-broken families, homelessness and suicide.

Clarity comes from a notable Vermont legislator who recently tried to repeal Vermont’s laws legalizing sports betting and lottery:

"I would hope that just-minded legislators in other states take a hard look at how these predatory contracts extract wealth from their most vulnerable residents. The losses are predictable, and the harm is measurable. No state should rely on a funding mechanism that depends on its people losing." – Rep. Troy Headrick

In Opposition of HB 1308

Legalizing Sports Wagering in Hawai'i

I stand in opposition to all forms of legalized gambling in Hawai'i, including the provision of HB1308 to legalize sports wagering.

As the former pastor and friend of Judy Rantala, a member of Church of the Crossroads, who for many years openly and bravely opposed legalized gambling in our state, I am pleased to follow in her footsteps. The problems of legalized gambling are evident for everyone to understand. It is a regressive tax in disguise, for it preys upon and is supported by the poorest people in our communities, as is evidenced from several studies of the issue. It fosters the kind of addiction that affects the financial stability of countless families. It promotes a quick fix to shortfalls in state revenue, and all too often does not deliver all that is promised. It is far better for us to find more equitable methods of raising needed revenue for the work of our state government.

To pass HB 1308 will begin a slippery slope for more and more legalized gambling in Hawai'i. Let's remain one of the two states left that do not have to deal with its ill effects.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Neal MacPherson

Nu'uanu

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 9:05:06 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeannine Johnson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

At a time when our residents are living paycheck to paycheck, let's not legalize a highly addictive activity that will tear down families instead of build them up. We can't make it easier for families to enter into the cycle of poverty, or remain there. All evidence shows that gambling is a loser's game. The only winners in gambling are predatory businesses, while families, nonprofits and government agencies bear the social and economic consequences of the broke and broken.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 9:13:06 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
nanci kreidman	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

there has been sufficient discussion and debate about the harms related to gambling for more than 30 years. those risks and harm to community have not evaporated, or been diminished. in fact, conditions in our community have worsened. it does not seem like a prudent time to pass legislation to engage in online or any other form of gambling. thank you for taking into consideration the views of community and those who have been on the front lines in service to this community. mahalo.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 9:14:44 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Coralie Matayoshi	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong opposition to HB1380. Proponents are trying to sell this as a harmless bill and point to its revenue generating potential. But people are already addicted to their phones and with 24/7 access, AI, and targeted data strategies, sports betting becomes a supercharged addiction. Don't let the allure of money encourage something that is detrimental to individuals and our community.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 9:20:54 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patty Kahanamoku-Teruya	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I'm testifying in opposition to HB1308, relating to sports gaming. Hawaii have kept gaming, gambling out of our State for years, for the purpose of safe communities for our generation to come. This is not a way to increase revenue for the state, it will definitely open the doors for crime, illegal activity and hurt families. I urge you to please kill this bill and think of the future of our children, your children and our families. Mahalo for this opportunity, God bless you!

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 10:22:38 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christy MacPherson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

As a social worker who has worked with countless families with very low incomes, I am vehemently OPPOSED to HB1308 HD3 SD1. I know all too well that when someone is desperate for money to take care of their children/families, gambling and other quick money schemes are very appealing (and tempting). Let's not do this to our people. The fact that this is included in this bill, "Problem Gambling Prevention and Treatment Special Fund" tells anyone that we are anticipating a number of gamblers developing a serious addiction. Seems extremely irresponsible to pass this bill given what we know.

Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 10:28:53 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Chinen	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

People of Hawaii love to gamble. Las Vegas is a favorite destination. Only a handful of people actually win anything but our people keep on chasing the dream of making it big and bringing home a fortune. Gambling is a fool's game and should be avoided. The advantage of it being legal in Las Vegas is that it is just once or twice a year that the hopeful get to gamble away their hard earned money.

Legalizing it in Hawaii would ruin families because it would become too easy to play the fool's game. It can become an addiction and the path to bankruptcy and poverty.

Please don't allow our islands to become a gambling paradise. Keep it safe, clean, and nurturing for the sake of keeping Hawaii, Hawaii.

Thank you for your attention,

Sarah Chinen

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 7:09:40 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taylor Barnett	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose HB1308 to legalize online sports gambling. Hawai'i families are already struggling—why legalize a highly addictive, financially destructive industry that will tear families down instead of build them up? The only winners in gambling are billion-dollar corporations, while families, nonprofits and government agencies bear the social and economic consequences of the broke and broken. Let's prioritize our people and values over profits and predatory industries.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 7:11:47 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Reyna Sueoka	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Sample Testimony:

I strongly oppose HB1308 to legalize online sports gambling.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 7:16:35 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Germaine Meyers	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY OPPOSE HB1308 HD3 SD1.

Hawai‘i families are already struggling—why legalize a highly addictive, financially destructive industry that will tear families down instead of build them up?

The only winners in gambling are billion-dollar corporations, while families, nonprofits and government agencies bear the social and economic consequences of the broke and broken.

Let’s prioritize our people and values over profits and predatory industries."

Make no mistake, this bill is a direct threat to the hardworking families of our beloved state.

Gambling is a predatory industry that **preys on the most vulnerable, destroys families, and feeds social and economic devastation.**

Once we open this door, we won’t be able to close it.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 7:27:53 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cora Yamamoto	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a constituent of Senator Kim and I strongly oppose legalizing online gambling. Let us get additional funding for critical State government services from other sources. While illegal gambling is rampant now, legalizing and taxing it has not solved problems associated with it in other states.

This would be a regressive tax, negatively affecting most those who can least afford it. Online gambling is highly addictive and is made even more so by the companies that provide the platforms for it.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 7:28:59 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Don Baluran	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose all forms of gambling in Hawaii.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 7:49:30 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Valerie Wayne	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I vigorously oppose this bill to authorize online sports gambling. We've known for years that the harms legal gambling outweigh the benefits. It harms those who can least afford to lose their money, creating addictions and other social problems that we don't need. The funds that are supposedly gained through gambling are rarely spent in the way its advocates claim. A vote against this bill is a vote for the citizens of our state. Please join me in opposing it.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 8:58:53 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bruce Anderson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose any type of legalized gambling in Hawaii. We have enough difficulty here with low wages and high cost of living, enticing low wage earners to waste money on gambling will just exasperbate the problem.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 8:11:58 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judi Chang	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill

**Testimony of Brandon Maka'awa'awa
Vice President, Nation of Hawai'i
In Opposition to HB1308, HD3, SD1
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
April 2, 2025**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Brandon Maka'awa'awa, and I serve as Vice President for the Nation of Hawai'i. I submit this testimony in strong opposition to HB1308, HD3, SD1.

This bill proposes to legalize online sports wagering and place regulatory authority with the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism. While the framing may suggest progress, the structure and intent reflect a continuation of policy practices that prioritize profit for corporations over long-term, equitable outcomes for the people of Hawai'i.

Despite the claims that this measure would create a regulated, revenue-generating model, its design is fundamentally flawed. The bill lacks the kind of structural integrity, public accountability, and inclusive planning that any gaming policy in Hawai'i must have to succeed. Rather than presenting a community-focused model, HB1308 reads as an operator-centered framework that benefits those best positioned to take advantage of regulatory gaps that would only exist in Hawaii as opposed to the other 40 jurisdictions that have sports betting in the United States.

Several elements of the bill are especially concerning:

- DBEDT is not a regulatory agency. It does not have the investigative or enforcement mechanisms, specialized knowledge, or institutional safeguards needed to manage an industry as complex and high-risk as online sports betting. Delegating gaming oversight to an agency focused on economic promotion, not regulation, creates a fundamental conflict of interest.
- Every other gaming regulatory oversight board, whether that be an independent board or one that reports through a division of government such as the lottery or even the Department of Revenue, has a board that provides oversight. This bill does not even contemplate that structure
- The policy structure relies heavily on low tax rates, high operator flexibility, and limited restrictions on practices like promotional bet deductions. These are not neutral decisions. They align directly with the policy preferences of large, online gaming operators who stand to profit, not the public or Native Hawaiian communities who will bear the consequences.
- There is no guaranteed reinvestment into Native Hawaiian communities, no mandatory allocation for public programs, and no independent gaming commission to ensure that rules are enforced fairly. Instead, we are asked to trust that future oversight will emerge from within an agency unprepared to manage this responsibility.
- Perhaps most importantly, there has been no meaningful Native Hawaiian leadership in the creation or advancement of this bill. We are once again asked to accept economic policy that affects our lands, our families, and our futures without any assurance that our voices have shaped the outcome.
- The bill has been amended to allow for a Hawaiian operator to be able to obtain a "license." While we still are fundamentally opposed to this bill in every aspect, that license should this pass, be centered around Native Hawaiian efforts that can provide for

housing, education, and other culturally specific initiatives. This license should be exempt from whatever tax rate is decided to allow maximum investment into these causes.

What makes this particularly frustrating is that there is a pathway forward. Native Hawaiian leaders and organizations have made themselves available, have submitted detailed testimony, and have consistently called for a more inclusive and pono approach. Yet, each draft of this legislation has continued to reflect industry narratives that continue to advance their objectives while sidelining community expertise.

Let me be clear. The Nation of Hawai'i is not opposed to economic innovation. We are open to exploring new models that create opportunity, address inequality, and invest in our people. But we are opposed to policy that treats Native Hawaiians as an afterthought. We are opposed to frameworks built on convenience rather than consultation.

We have seen the tactics before; public-private partnerships that begin with promises of shared prosperity but end in concentrated profits for outside actors. We have seen data used selectively to justify decisions that benefit a few while placing risk on the many. And we have seen legislation move forward even when it lacks public trust and legitimacy.

This is not how Hawai'i should operate. This is not how pono policy is made.

If the state is serious about building a responsible and strict gaming framework, the process must begin with Native Hawaiian leadership, must be grounded in community priorities, and must establish independent, enforceable safeguards. Otherwise, the result will be a system that reflects the very inequities it claims to address. There are other bills that this body is considering which take a much more appropriate approach to Native Hawaiian economic objectives and those should be considered well before this bill. It should be deferred today.

HB1308, HD3, SD1 is not the vehicle for responsible reform. It is the product of a flawed process and a flawed structure that does not safeguard anyone but the operators that seek their own benefit. I urge this committee to reject the bill and commit to a better path forward, one rooted in equity, transparency, and true partnership with the Native Hawaiian people.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Brandon Maka'awa'awa
Nation of Hawai'i

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 9:21:56 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charles F. "Skip" Armistead	Testifying for Faith Community of the National Coalition to Stop Predatory Gambling	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony for HB 1308**April 1, 2025**

Have you ever lost someone you loved (a child, for instance) because you were not diligent enough to watch them? When you were not looking, someone kidnapped the person? It's horrible! The gambling industry is trying to kidnap our Hawaiian citizens. Why?

From my experience, Hawaii's sports gambling bill (HB1308 HD3 SD1) has six major. To be blunt, while this bill seeks money for the state "because everyone's doing it anyway," the bill transforms the Hawaiian legislature (unknowingly) into problem gamblers, drug pushers, and scammers. Sports gambling in Hawaii will hurt national security and increase suicide. It is also very unchristian. Hawaii will be the loser! Harsh? Why? Let's take each of these one at a time.

Problem Gamblers

The difference between addicted gamblers and problem gamblers is simple. Addicted gamblers are not aware of most of what they are doing while gambling and cannot stop. A problem gambler is very cognizant of gambling and knows the gambling needs to stop, but keeps trying, hoping to win big.

Many of Hawaii's state legislators **know intuitively that they should not legalize gambling because, in gambling, the majority always loses**. Still, they support it because they hope to cash in big and hope the harm is minimal. Just like problem gamblers, our Hawaii legislature is gambling on the lives and resources of the state. Like problem gamblers, they rationalize that there are "always a few who get hurt" (collateral damage), so let's include a "Problem Gambling Prevention and Treatment Special Fund" to help them. James Whelan, the Director of Tennessee's Gambling Clinic, created to help people with gambling disorders, says that there are over 100,000 citizens and that just in five years of sports gambling in the state. He also reports that less than 2% get the state's help. Which family member, friend, or child do you want to be "collateral damage." So, the "Problem Gambling Prevention and Treatment Special Fund" will not help the other 98%.

Drug Pushers

The effect of gambling on the brain is **exactly the same as that of an opioid**. We still have an opioid crisis, and our governments are trying to stop the drug crisis. Yet, it's a contradiction to stop a drug crisis while creating a gambling addiction crisis. Just as drugs destroy individual lives and families while creating fraud and crime, so does gambling addiction. Today, one in twenty-five underage children are problem or addicted gamblers, and one in twenty college students are the same. Do you really want to create something that will hurt one in twenty-five children and youth, plus cause one in twenty college students to become problem gamblers?

Thus, the gambling industry rationalization: It is already on the phone, and people are already gambling anyway, so there's nothing we can do about that. Yes, there is! The University of Massachusetts discovered that it's not the form of gambling that makes a difference. It's 1) the LEGALIZED availability and 2) the presence of rapid betting. Before any form of gambling was legal in any state, there was a small percentage of the population that gambled illegally. After it was legalized, the number of problems and addicted gamblers rose significantly. All objective non-gambling funded studies show that legalized gambling increases illegal gambling, not decreasing it.

Legislative Scammers

Scammers know they are taking advantage of another. The gambling industry knows it will go after the vulnerable ones. Over eighty percent of the gambling industry income comes from four percent of gamblers, the truly addicted ones. Be very aware of this information if you vote for sports gambling because you will be voting to scam your Hawaiian citizens you swore to protect.

How is it scamming? 1) The gambling industry targets individuals. If one gambles, the sports books know exactly a gambler's betting tendencies. Since the games are time delayed on TV, if you tend to bet a pass, they'll use AI to adjust the odds one way or another depending upon the actual play, setting the odds you'll bet incorrectly. Because of time delay, if one bets incorrectly, you lose. If you win the bet, investigators have discovered that sportsbooks often say your wager was too late.

2) If you bet \$1,000 during a game and lose \$500, they'll report and "celebrate" you winning \$500. They will promise you "Free" wager amounts such as \$10,000, yet you never get it because they put conditions on the \$10,000, such as winning at least \$25,000 before you get the \$10,000.

3) The industry provides "coaches" and "contacts" to reach out to their "best gamblers," encouraging them to continue wagering until there is no more money in their bank accounts. Then, they drop you.

In gambling, the majority always loses. So, Hawaii becomes complicit in scamming people, the overwhelming majority of whom will always lose. The one winner will be the sportsbook.

Sports Gambling Hurts National Security and Hawaii's Security

Dr. Kindt also reports that military personnel and government officials who gamble are becoming susceptible to foreign governments using military personnel and employees to get national security secrets. It's common sense. I am a liability if I work for the Navy in Hawaii, have security clearances for secret information, and gamble. Foreign countries use my gambling to blackmail me. This military sensitivity and a weakened economy due to gambling is why Russia closed all its 2,230 casinos in 2006-7. We don't need another Pearl Harbor.

Gambling Causes Suicides

In England, Parliament received studies that showed a direct relationship between gambling and an increase in suicide. Eventually, Parliament realized that their gambling laws were killing people. If Hawaii's legislature approves sports gambling, we are sanctioning suicides.

Hawaii Will Be the Loser

While the above should be enough, I must debunk the myth that Hawaii will receive new revenue. Yes, it will receive a lot of new revenue. However, as Dr. John Kindt of the U of Illinois reports, experience has shown worldwide, including the mainland states, that for every dollar a state or community receives from gambling, the state loses between seven and twelve dollars, depending on the state. There are no brick-and-mortar buildings in this bill, so there will not be a large number of new jobs. Sports gambling will not attract tourists to Hawaii, so there will be no new income from tourists. However, there will be less tax revenue because citizens will gamble on sports instead of purchasing goods and services from Hawaii. Since most sports gamblers lose, their money will go to the sports books, not the local and state economy. The government and businesses will have new costs to defray the new crime, fraud, bankruptcies, addictions, and much more.

UnChristian

Easter is less than three weeks from now. For legislators who care, one key to the Christian faith is Christ's death on the cross. Notice that soldiers are gambling at the foot of the cross for his robe. With Christ, EVERYONE can win. Through gambling, the MAJORITY ALWAYS LOSES.

I led a group of Tennesseans called "Religious Leaders for a Gambling-Free Tennessee." I am still amazed that we had all the Christian denominations, non-denominations, Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Mormons, Unitarians, plus several other groups, including atheists. The ONLY thing everyone agreed upon was gambling was not good; in fact, it is evil. We could not agree upon God, but gambling was universally bad. Yes, the Roman Catholics were initially reluctant to be part of it, but they, too, came around.

Again, with Christ helping, not exploiting people, everyone can win. With gambling, the majority always loses.

Conclusion

So, I encourage you to be a statesman and vote against legalizing sports gambling. I assume you don't want to be a problem gambler, drug pusher, or scammer. You don't want to hurt national security (especially the security of Hawaii), increase suicides, or make Hawaii's economy lose more than it makes. As a state legislator, I assume you want to be Christ-like in your decisions that enable everyone to win, for **in gambling, the majority always loses.**

Charles F. "Skip" Armistead

Faith Communities of the National Coalition to Stop Predatory Gambling

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 9:41:21 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Tillotson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I respectfully urge you to vote against this bill for the following reasons which have been validated by the sad experience of other states with legalized gambling:

- **Gambling's social harms outweigh any benefits it would bring.**
- **Gambling disproportionately harms those who can least afford the unreasonable financial risks associated with gambling.**
- **Gambling moneys rarely get spent in the manner that proponents claim.**
- **Gambling would create more social ills and addictions that we don't need.**

Mahalo for considering my testimony.

Aloha, Richard Tillotson

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 9:38:46 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katherine MacPherson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have lived in places where gambling was lawful, and as a teacher and principal, I have seen the terrible outcomes associated with gambling . Food scarcity for children, households going into bankruptcy, divorces and loss of family time with children and others, to name a few. It is all consuming once given green light. Monies spent are never recovered. It is a voluntary tax that becomes involuntary. And these bills are never accompanied with equally supported legislation that would help those addicted to gaming . There is enough soft gambling in Hawaii now. Please vote this measure down and provide safeguards for community. .

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 9:49:30 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Blair shurtleff	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We are Hawaii registered voters and totally appose this measure. It will far more harm than good for the state. Lets stay unique and steer clear of this home wreacking bill. You will create more gambling addicts here in our home state of hawaii that wil break apart Ohana.

Mahaol for voting no!!!

LATE

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 10:37:41 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard J Robinson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

History for each and every state has proven that gambling in any form promotes crime and addiction as well as the loss of many peoples income.

LATE

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 10:55:46 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joy Chinen	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I stand strongly opposed to HB1308 HD3 SD1!

I realize that you are trying to earn money for our beautiful State, but this cannot be one of the ways. Opening this door will NOT bring income because on the other side of the door we will be facing families who will be in poverty, families that will be losing homes, children that will be in line to continue in gambling addictions because that is what is being modeled for them. And the cycle goes on and on. The consequences are too great. On that side of the door will be mental health conselling, suicides, homelessness, crimes like burglary, smash and grabs, etc.

Please DO NOT open this door to gambling in our Hawaii. Let's continue to be two of the States that do not have legalized gambling.

LATE

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 11:04:15 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin Chinen	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Members of the Ways & Means Committee,

I strongly oppose HB1301 HD3 SD1 for 3 main reasons:

1. **Gambling Addiction & Financial Risks** – Legalized sports betting can lead to an increase in gambling addiction, which can have serious financial and personal consequences. Easy access through online platforms make it even more challenging for vulnerable individuals to control their habits.
2. **Integrity of Sports** – There is concern that widespread betting could lead to match-fixing or corruption, where players, referees, or coaches might be influenced to manipulate outcomes for financial gain. Even if rare, scandals could damage the credibility of sports.
3. **Youth Exposure & Normalization** – With betting ads and promotions becoming more common, younger audiences may be more likely to view gambling as a normal part of sports culture. This can lead to underage gambling or unhealthy attitudes toward risk-taking.

I respectfully ask you to vote no on this bill that can hurt the future of our families and keiki.

Blessings,

Erin Chinen (Kaneohe mother of 3, former D.O.E. teacher)

LATE

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 12:09:44 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janice Palma-Glennie	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

aloha,

i just sent a long testimony detailing my reasons for opposing HB1308 HD3 SD1 and all other efforts to legalize gambling in our state. however, i'm not sure if it went through as i didn't receive a confirmation message.

in short, my reasons are:

- 1) who will regulate gaming? our state can't/won't regulate what it has on its plate already.
- 2) who will enforce the law? our state can't/won't regulate what it has on its plate already.
- 3) what are the societal costs and who and how will we treat those who need the help that comes from rampant gambling addiction that follows the legalization of gaming?
- 4) how much will the state REALLY gain in revenue vs the costs of gaming including #1, 2 and 3 above? And who can foresee what those costs in our unique state are going to be?

say "NO" to HB1308 HD3 SD1 and all other attempts to legalizing gambling .

mahalo and best,

janice palma-glennie

kailua-kona

LATE

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 12:10:51 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daryl Yamada	Testifying for Excel Church	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose the legalization of sports betting in Hawaii. Gambling of any type does not belong in Hawaii. The devastating impact on families is something that cannot be overlooked. Gambling addictions have destroyed families across our nation and we need to ensure the safety of our greatest resource, our keiki. I urge you to please oppose legalizing sports betting in Hawaii.

LATE

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 12:42:22 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robin Ventura	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

I ask that you OPPOSE HB1308 HD3 SD1 which would allow "Sport Wagering"

Those who support this bill frequently speak on the money it will bring in. But the damage to the families who can't afford "wagering" (a nicer term for gambling) isn't mentioned. Those who can afford to "wager" or bet, can afford to fly to Las Vegas. Those who can't afford to gamble, are enticed by the jackpot - hoping this will be their way out of the financial mess they are in. So they place that bet with money that should be going to pay their high rent, or the high price of gas so they can drive to their job, or money that should be used to buy groceries for their family. Innocent people get enticed & sucked in to the cry of "easy money". And their family goes deeper and deeper into debt.

Also, it turns those fun, Saturday family days at the football field, or soccer field (or swimming pool, or other kids' sporting event) into a day of praying their team wins so they can cover that "sports wager". This is not healthy for our families here in Hawaii!

Please don't be enticed by the lure of easy money for our state. Some people will have to pay . . . and those people will probably be those who can least afford it. The greater debt will lead to more anger and possibly domestic violence. Please look past the easy money to see the devastation which will happen to our local families.

Please vote NO on **HB1308 HD3 SD1**

Thank you for your attention to my testimony.

LATE

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 12:53:23 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cindy R Ajimine	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I **STRONGLY OPPOSE** this bill in no matter what form it is written. Please hear the people!

Youth Exposure & Normalization – With betting ads and promotions becoming more common, younger audiences may be more likely to view gambling as a normal part of sports culture. This can lead to underage gambling or unhealthy attitudes toward risk-taking.

Gambling Addiction & Financial Risks – Legalized sports betting can lead to an increase in gambling addiction, which can have serious financial and personal consequences. Easy access through online platforms make it even more challenging for vulnerable individuals to control their habits.

LATE**HB-1308-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 1:09:49 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erendira Aldana	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The respected news outlet, the Economist, released a investigative podcast earlier this year called SCAM, INC. In one episode (5 - Scam State) the journalist Sue Lin-Wong looks into a community, Bamban, in the Philippines that was involved in a national news story about corruption of the towns mayor and how this case is indicative of how "The Philippines is right now teetering on the edge of total state capture by criminal enterprises." The journalist notes how the legalization of online gambling business by then president Duterte in 2016. One of the selling points at that time was that the benefits of regulating the industry as legitimate would provide benefits to the country, including the creation of jobs. Over the course of the 8 episode arc it becomes clear how inviting in the legalization of betting also invited in grave problems of crime - including a cover for intricate criminal networks to prop up the apparent legitimate gambling operations. By 2022, Senator Win Gatchalian and many Philippine Senators wanted the gambling operations shut down vs continuing to regulate them.

In the following episode (6 – Buckets of Billions) the journalist teams demonstrates the role sports gambling plays in international criminal money laundering. As a result of her extensive journalistic project Sue Ling-Wong notes “ Scamming and gambling coexist... and there’s a reason for that. The criminals use casinos and betting platforms to launder their money.” This is because "anything that you win on a gambling website or sports betting website become legitimate”.

With the case study of the Phillipines, as reported by the Economist, as a reference I strongly oppose House Bill 1308. The risks and burden are too great for our community to bear. It is a grossly inappropriate approach to generate tax revenue for our state with severe consequences.

LATE

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 2:00:34 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin Gayer	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'd like to vote in opposition to HB 1308. Sports betting cannot be beneficial at all to our state

LATE

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 2:14:42 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maki Morinoue	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

I oppose. Too many negligent unanswered questions that shows care for our community. Especially when we face housing crisis, high mental health issues with NO good support and medical support on all islands!
especially when the campaign spending report clearly shows PAY TO PLAY connections with specific politicians.

Especially with mass Federal level layoffs that have no integrity, and groceries and daily living cost sky rocket. It makes no sense to bring fire to our community already on fire!

VOTE NO please.

Mahalo for your time,

Maki Morinoue

Holualoa, HI

LATE

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 1:37:37 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kay S. M. Hishinuma	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Legislators,

It is a rare occasion that I feel the need to speak out regarding the decisions that you make as you represent me; however, this bill that is under consideration is too important to remain silent. I am very much opposed.

Hawaii has held out against this for many years - for good reason. Island families already struggle with the high cost of living here. Gambling may seem like an easy and lucrative addition to our economy, but its profit comes on the backs of the many that it will damage. Addictions, crime, sports fixing, the degradation of our youth are only a few of the evils that we will be embracing for the almighty dollar.

Please. Think of the victims who will suffer. What if it is your own family? A son. A daughter. A husband. A wife. A favorite uncle or aunt. Gambling is not selective in its victims. I know too many who already have been damaged by it. You know that it already claims lives here. Please do not make it legal and easy for it to claim more.

Thank you for reading this. Please don't stop at reading. Please stop this bill.

Sincerely,

Kay Hishinuma

LATE

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 2:59:05 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beverly Santarelli	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose **OPPOSE HB1308 SD1**

we all know the dangers of gambling and a heartache and Negative told and consequences it will have on Hawaii voting for gambling. Is Adele with the devil.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 3:52:06 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Darrah Lovelace	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose the legalization of gambling. Most people will lose money in gambling. It will not enrich the majority of Hawaii citizens. This is not a bill for the people. Let's keep Hawaii gambling free.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 4:06:18 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lora Burbage	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

Please OPPOSE this measure! The trade off to gain tax revenue from this activity is not worth the potential destruction of families due to the lack of self control to get rich quick. We want to incentivise people to work rather than tempt them to gamble.

I work with homeless and drug addicts and this is just one more temptation to choose poorly. As a society we already pay for the bad choices many are making so do the right thing and let's not put more temptations out there.

Mahalo nui loa for doing the right thing!

Lora Burbage

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 4:25:15 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alana Sooriyakumar	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill.

Gambling has only shown negative effects to areas where it is allowed. The bill says “sports wagering shall not be considered games of chance or gambling,” but there is nothing else sports wagering is. By definition wagering on sports is a game of chance and gambling. It is both.

Look at the environment surrounding casinos, game rooms, and chicken fighting...nothing good is happening in those areas. Increased drunkenness and substance abuse, increased violence, increased driving under the influence, etc. Sports wagering will be the same.

Please vote no.

Mahalo,

Alana

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 4:43:37 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Holly Hino-Agustin	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly oppose this bill. Legalizing gambling in our beautiful State of Hawaii will be so detrimental to Hawaii's families and people. Our local people already struggle financially in one of the most expensive economies. Allowing this bill to pass is a gateway to more homelessness, broken homes and families, and more drug and alcohol use. Please really consider what you are doing because once this door is open there's no turning back.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 5:07:15 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
albert shigemura	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I ***OPPOSE*** HB 1308 for the following reasons;

1. Gambling Addiction & Financial Risks – Legalized sports betting can lead to an increase in gambling addiction, which can have serious financial and personal consequences. Easy access through online platforms make it even more challenging for vulnerable individuals to control their habits.
2. Integrity of Sports – There is concern that widespread betting could lead to match-fixing or corruption, where players, referees, or coaches might be influenced to manipulate outcomes for financial gain. Even if rare, scandals could damage the credibility of sports.
3. Youth Exposure & Normalization – With betting ads and promotions becoming more common, younger audiences may be more likely to view gambling as a normal part of sports culture. This can lead to underage gambling or unhealthy attitudes toward risk-taking.
4. Gambling adds another level of criminal involvement and with lack of strong oversight, consumers can be vulnerable to unfair practices, fraud, addiction risks, and breakup of families.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 5:11:17 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Barientos	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We strongly oppose the legalization of sports gambling and betting in Hawaii. This policy change would introduce serious risks to our community, increasing gambling addiction, financial hardship, and crime rates.

Legalized sports betting creates easy access to gambling, making it harder for vulnerable individuals to resist addiction. The financial consequences of problem gambling can devastate families, leading to debt, bankruptcy, and an increased burden on social services. Furthermore, widespread sports betting threatens the integrity of sports, increasing the risk of match-fixing and corruption, which could damage trust in athletics at all levels.

Another major concern is youth exposure and normalization. The rise of gambling advertisements and promotions would make betting seem like an acceptable and routine part of sports culture, increasing the likelihood of underage gambling and irresponsible risk-taking behaviors.

Additionally, legalizing sports gambling has been linked to rising crime rates in other regions, including fraud, money laundering, and illegal betting operations. Hawaii's unique culture and strong community values should not be jeopardized by predatory gambling industries that profit from addiction and financial ruin.

We urge lawmakers to protect our communities, families, and the integrity of sports by rejecting the legalization of sports gambling and betting in Hawaii.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 5:56:37 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark Blair	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha from Kapa'au, Kohala! Mahalo for your service to our state. I am writing to request you vote NO on sports wagering. As a newbie to Kohala - Hawaii resident since 1981 - I appreciate the place of sports here. We can brag on the success our kids have even with our small population base! Play and competition builds character, discipline, integrity, comradarie, and fair play. Money temptingly offers a fast track to success. Perhaps I can throw the game for money? Betting can easily become an addiction, evidence for this is abundant. I urge you to make sure the stream of sports stays clean in Kohala. Betting and money will eventually muddy our water. With prayers and aloha, Mark Blair

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 11:53:15 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marion Logan	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Honorable Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

As a voting constituent from Senate District 14, I voice my opposition to HB 1308 in relating to sports betting. This is a step toward legalizing gambling which will have negative effects on our Hawaii Citizens for several reasons.

1. A 2023 report from Capitol Hill Citizen highlighted increased usage and pervasiveness among high school students.
2. BMC Psychology 2023 researched 311 college students and found 75% had experience with sports betting. The study highlighted that young adults are more likely to participate in gambling with increased low perception of harm. They overestimate the likelihood they will win and when they lose, the sense of loss has greater impact on their mental health than if they win.
3. Gamblers Anonymous highlights that 20% of addicted gamblers have attempted suicide—the same numbers of opioid and cocaine addicts.
4. The Lancet from November 2024, highlighted harmful gambling effects such as increased domestic violence and suicide, financial destitution, and family rupture.

Given the statistics and the impact on society and younger generations—the costs outweigh the benefits.

Wouldn't it be better to invest in our younger generations than steal from them? Why don't we lure emerging industries and invest in human capital than lure corrupt industries who capitalize from human vulnerabilities?

Andrew Laurence
Honolulu, Hawaii 96815

Testimony for the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Wednesday, April 2, 2025, 10:01 a.m.

OPPOSING HB1308 HD3 SD1

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee:

I am testifying in strong opposition of HB1308 HD3 SD1, *RELATING TO SPORTS WAGERING*.

While some may argue that legal sports betting can generate revenue and create jobs, we must also recognize the serious problems that states which have already legalized it are now grappling with. I urge you to consider some of the most pressing issues with which these states now contend:

- 1. Increased Problem Gambling Rates:** States that have legalized sports betting have seen a marked increase in problem gambling. Research indicates that the number of individuals seeking help for gambling addiction has surged, and we risk introducing a new generation to this vice without adequate support systems in place.
- 2. Youth Exposure and Gambling Normalization:** Legalizing sports betting does not just attract adults; it also normalizes gambling behavior among youths. Advertisements and promotions target younger demographics, leading to increased gambling participation among minors and young adults.
- 3. Lack of Regulation and Oversight:** Many states have struggled to establish robust regulatory frameworks to oversee sports betting. This has resulted in inconsistent practices and loopholes that can be exploited by unscrupulous operators, increasing the risk of fraud and corruption.
- 4. Revenue Shortfalls:** While proponents often tout potential tax revenue from sports betting, many states have not seen the expected financial windfall. Increased competition from neighboring states and the actual costs of regulation often lead to disappointing revenue projections.
- 5. Diverted Attention from Essential Services:** The focus on sports betting may divert attention and funds from other critical areas such as education, healthcare, and addiction services. The anticipated revenue does not always materialize, leading to budget shortfalls that impact these vital services.
- 6. Integrity Issues in Sports:** Legal sports betting raises concerns about the integrity of sporting events. States have reported instances of match-fixing and other corrupt practices, undermining the very essence of fair competition and eroding public trust.
- 7. Increased Law Enforcement Burden:** With the rise in sports betting comes an increase in related crime—such as illegal betting operations and fraud—which places a higher burden on law enforcement agencies to monitor and enforce compliance.

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Honolulu, Hawaii 96815

8. **Social Costs:** Beyond the financial aspects, the social costs of gambling addiction, including family breakdowns, mental health issues, and increased crime rates, often outweigh any financial benefits derived from legal sports betting.

9. **Negative Impact on Local Businesses:** Many small businesses, particularly in areas reliant on tourism and entertainment, have reported declines in revenue as individuals divert their spending to gambling rather than local establishments.

10. **Regulatory Challenges Across State Lines:** As more states legalize sports betting, the resulting patchwork of regulations creates confusion and difficulty for both consumers and operators. This inconsistency poses challenges in terms of compliance and can inadvertently facilitate illegal betting practices.

While the allure of legal sports betting may seem appealing at first glance, it is essential that we consider the substantial challenges that accompany it. Our priority should be to safeguard our communities and protect individuals from the risks associated with gambling. I urge you to vote against this sports wagering bill and to instead focus on initiatives that bolster our economy and support healthy, thriving communities.

Mahalo nui loa for your consideration of these concerns,



Andrew Laurence

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 11:20:20 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ron Yoshida	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Honorable Legislators,

I respectfully opposed this Bill, which would open the door to legalizing gambling in Hawaii.

Mahalo,

Ron Yoshida

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 10:15:47 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelly Nishimura	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose HB1308 to legalize online sports gambling.

- Legalization normalizes gambling and makes it more accessible and marketable, which expands rather than contains gambling harm.
- Online gambling is THE MOST ADDICTIVE form of gambling.
- Regulation won't stop predatory practices. Legal sportsbooks use manipulative tactics like risk-free bets, data tracking, targeted ads, and VIP hosts to keep users hooked.
- The social consequences are devastating. Gambling addiction is as destructive as drug addiction, increasing rates of crime, bankruptcy, domestic violence, divorce/broken families, homelessness and suicide.

We should heed the words of a Vermont legislator who recently tried to repeal Vermont's laws that legalized sports betting:

"I would hope that just-minded legislators in other states take a hard look at how these predatory contracts extract wealth from their most vulnerable residents. The losses are predictable, and the harm is measurable. No state should rely on a funding mechanism that depends on its people losing." – Rep. Troy Headrick

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 8:55:23 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rachel Robinson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou!!

I oppose HB1308. I urge you all to vote NO. Please do not open up Hawai‘i to the filth that would be allowed in.

Hawai‘i has its own unique beauty. Many visitors call it paradise. Many flock here for the weather, the beaches, and the natural beauty. Be assured that moniker will no longer stand if this wretched piece of legislation is allowed.

Hawai‘i already has many residents, many of whom are natives, who are addicted to gambling, just to mention ONE thing.

For those who would even consider introducing this horrid bill, have you thought of how this would change the very fiber of the islands? Have any of you thought about how the family unit would be detrimentally impacted? Have any of you ever even thought about the children? They are already under attack. Abuse, molestation, kidnapping, pedophiles, perverts, drugs, poverty, alcoholism are already present in their lives and/or spheres. The passing of this horrible idea of a bill will just compound bad elements already running and ruining people's lives.

On paper, this despicable bill looks like it could be a money maker for the state. For the gambling addicts in Hawai‘i this bill would also cause natives to drown their lives away. There is already so much against Hawaiians, why would you increase the harm??? However, the pipe dream you're dreaming of will backfire. Then who is going to pick up the pieces? YOU?? For anyone to think this is a good idea, they don't and can't actually care for anyone but themselves and their agenda.

Is money really important to you who dared introduce this legislation?? More important than family?? More important than children??

Let me paint a very broad picture of what will happen should this death be allowed roots in the state. If you will not take a stand to protect Hawai‘i and the residents here, then this will be the new home for more filth to take root uncontested.

Just like sin of every sort runs rampant in Sin City, so it will be here. And Hawai'i will be unrecognizable.

And the blame will lie squarely on your shoulders Daniel Holt, Darius Kila, and Chris Todd. Please remember that...because I will.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 5:25:41 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Liza Kobayashi	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hi, my name is Liza Kobayashi and I am totally opposed to allowing sports wagering in Hawai'i.

To some, it may appear harmless if this is passed. Some of you may already participate in sports wagering when you go to Vegas or perhaps wager bets during Superbowl. No big deal. Or is it?

Most people who end up addicted to gambling, losing their savings and homes, or even ending up homeless because of gambling and wagering bets, started down this dark road by what seemed a very harmless open door and path. Hey, it's fun! Everyone is doing it! I may make a quick buck. So harmless Or is it?

If this bill is passed, this would be opening the door to more opportunities for people to gamble but with it comes a costly price tag. Any kind of legalized gambling will negatively impact some families and individuals in Hawaii - many who are local and are desperate to try anything to make more money - even though the odds are stacked against them.

Just like the frog that is submerged in a pot of cold water which is then put on a stove and slowly heated until the frog dies from overheating when it could have jumped out at any time to save its life, there will be people who will walk through a dark door leading to more and more uncontrollable gambling if this bill is passed.

Please do NOT support this bill. Please keep the door closed on gambling in Hawaii- which includes sports wagering.

Thank you for your time.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 5:37:35 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
MARIO GARCIA	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Petition to Oppose HD 1308 HD3 SD1 – Legalized Sports Betting in Hawai‘i

To the Hawai‘i State Legislature:

I, strongly oppose HD 1308 HD3 SD1, which seeks to legalize online sports betting in our state. While some argue that this bill will bring additional revenue, I believe that the long-term consequences will be detrimental to our communities, families, and overall well-being.

1. Increased Gambling Addiction and Social Harm – Studies show that legalized sports betting leads to higher rates of gambling addiction, financial ruin, and mental health issues. Hawai‘i should not promote an industry that profits from addiction.
2. Negative Impact on Families and Communities – Problem gambling affects entire families, leading to financial instability, domestic conflict, and increased reliance on social services.
3. Regulatory and Enforcement Challenges – Hawai‘i lacks the necessary infrastructure to regulate and enforce online sports betting, creating opportunities for illegal gambling operations to thrive.
4. Unreliable Revenue Source – Many states that legalized sports betting have found that revenue projections were overestimated, while the social costs of addiction treatment and crime prevention outweighed any financial benefits.
5. Hawai‘i Should Not Depend on Gambling Profits – Our state should invest in sustainable and ethical economic solutions rather than turning to gambling, which exploits the vulnerable for profit.

HB-1308-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 5:37:35 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

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MARIO GARCIA	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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