
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU TO CONDUCT A STUDY
ON RELEVANT PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS TO GUIDE
DECISION-MAKING ON GAMING-RELATED ISSUES.

1 WHEREAS, it is important for Hawaii to diversify its
2 economy and address budget shortfalls; and

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4 WHEREAS, legalized gambling is a recurrent and popular idea
5 to address these issues; and

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7 WHEREAS, nearly every legislative session, including the
8 Regular Session of 2021, legalized gambling legislation is
9 introduced; and

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11 WHEREAS, nevertheless, Hawaii is one of only two states
12 without any form of legalized gambling; and

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14 WHEREAS, Hawaii's isolated geography makes the State
15 particularly sensitive to the destabilizing effects of outside
16 forces; and

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18 WHEREAS, although most people gamble recreationally, a
19 small proportion of individuals are harmed by gambling, which
20 can have an impact on the larger community; and

21
22 WHEREAS, similar to Hawaii's natural resources, local
23 communities must be protected as a delicate ecosystem; and

24
25 WHEREAS, any industry that is potentially addictive should
26 be treated as a potentially invasive harm; and

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28 WHEREAS, public testimony on legalized gambling legislation
29 has frequently referenced concerns regarding general crime,
30 organized crime, problem gambling, and other related issues,



1 including sex trafficking, domestic violence, school dropout
2 rates, and undesirable tourism effects; and

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4 WHEREAS, due to public opposition, proposals for legalized
5 gambling are swiftly rejected before sufficient debate can
6 occur, leaving key questions regarding the efficacy of regulated
7 gambling unanswered; and

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9 WHEREAS, unregulated, illegal gambling and gambling-related
10 issues are already impacting Hawaii; and

11
12 WHEREAS, although the Honolulu Police Department only
13 reported thirty-four arrests in 2019 and forty-four arrests in
14 2018 for gambling offenses, there are believed to be
15 approximately seventy to one hundred illegal gambling rooms on
16 Oahu; and

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18 WHEREAS, local authorities are also reporting an increased
19 demand for gambling due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

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21 WHEREAS, a 2009 study by the National Council on Problem
22 Gambling estimated that the social costs of gambling addiction
23 in Hawaii from twenty thousand problem gamblers and ten thousand
24 pathological gamblers was \$26,300,000; however, no public
25 funding was provided for gambling treatment and prevention; and

26
27 WHEREAS, dedicated and protected funding for gambling
28 research will help address these critical community issues; and

29
30 WHEREAS, to achieve a more productive discourse on whether
31 Hawaii should pursue legalized gambling, research on relevant
32 public health and safety concerns is necessary to guide
33 decision-making on gaming-related issues; now, therefore,

34
35 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
36 Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
37 of 2021, the Senate concurring, that the Legislative Reference
38 Bureau is requested to conduct a study to guide decision-making
39 on gaming-related issues; and



1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the research is requested to
2 address the following areas:

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- 4 (1) The prevalence of gambling problems before and after
5 initiation of legalized gambling, including:
- 6
- 7 (A) A baseline prevalence study to establish the
8 current state of gambling along the spectrum from
9 recreational to problem gambling, broken down by
10 demographic variables of interest, such as age,
11 gender, location, and community membership, and
12 to address the cultural characteristics of
13 gamblers and gambling communities; and
14
- 15 (B) If gambling is legalized, subsequent studies,
16 conducted at least one-year following the
17 initiation of legalized gambling, to assess
18 changes in gambling patterns and populations and
19 should evaluate the relationships to
20 gambling-related harms, such as comorbidity,
21 unemployment, criminal activity, and other
22 factors commonly evaluated in research
23 literature;
24
- 25 (2) Focused evaluation of gambling and the impact on
26 vulnerable populations, including research that:
- 27
- 28 (A) Identifies the attitudes of individuals in these
29 groups; how legalized gambling would positively
30 or negatively affect these individuals; and the
31 safeguards that could be instituted to amplify
32 the positive and mitigate the negative
33 consequences; and
34
- 35 (B) Includes policy analysis to eliminate loopholes
36 that create an incentive for predatory businesses
37 to emerge;
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- 39 (3) Economic impact studies to assess the effect of gaming
40 facilities on communities and the feasibility of
41 asset-based incentive programs for specific
42 communities; and
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1 (4) Impact studies to assess the effect of gaming
2 facilities on public health and safety in the
3 surrounding communities; and
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5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this
6 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of the
7 Legislative Reference Bureau.
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