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# HOUSE 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

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

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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,  
31 including sex trafficking, domestic violence, school dropout  
32 rates, and undesirable tourism effects; and



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2021, that the Legislative Reference Bureau is requested to conduct a study to guide decision-making 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:  
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- 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  
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- 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;  
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- 25 (2) Focused evaluation of gambling and the impact on  
26 vulnerable populations, including research that:  
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- 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  
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- 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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(4) Impact studies to assess the effect of gaming facilities on public health and safety in the surrounding communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau.

