



Written Statement Susan Sheridan Tucker
Executive Director, Minnesota Alliance on Problem Gambling
Minnesota Sports Waging HF 2000
House Judiciary and Civil Law
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Chair Jamie Becker-Finn and Members of the Committee,

Good morning, I'm Susan Sheridan Tucker, Executive Director of Minnesota Alliance on Problem Gambling. For 21 years, we have been the state affiliate to the National Council on Problem Gambling. The Alliance is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of those affected by problem gambling through advocacy, education, training and research. We hold a neutral position on legalizing gambling. This means *we do not support or oppose* the expansion of sports betting in Minnesota. *We do fiercely advocate, however, that any measure* affecting the accessibility of gambling provide for those adversely affected by this activity. This means funding for treatment, awareness and education, research and training. It also means that we expect all stakeholders involved in gambling, including operators and regulators, to adopt and implement best practices in reducing harm to all its customers, particularly those who are exhibiting problematic gambling behavior.

It's fitting that we should be considering a gambling expansion bill in March which is Problem Gambling Awareness Month. All over the country organizations like ours make special efforts throughout the month to get the word out that *problem gambling is an addiction, a public health issue and can be effectively treated*. We recognize that most Minnesotans can gamble without a problem. However, we must not forget the 250,000 Minnesota adults who exhibit problems with their gambling and the 56,000 who likely meet the clinical criteria for a gambling disorder. Nor the 10,000 high school students who indicate signs of problem gambling. You should also know that for every one gambler, there are seven to ten others who suffer harm because of their loved one's gambling.

There are many things I would like to share with you today, but due to time constraints, I am limiting my comments to the issue of information sharing.

Mobile betting is not like any kind of gambling we've seen before. I am urging all elected officials to insist on following the best practices when it comes to consumer protections. We've seen already from other states who have passed bills before us, that licensees have violated terms of the law and receive minor monetary fines. If we're serious about protecting those who are vulnerable to addiction, we need strong deterrents.

I'm asking for consideration to include additional language in Sec 19 Subd 3 Information Sharing. To enable a state university or a gambling neutral organization focused on prevention and responsible gambling to request access to aggregated data for purposes of conducting research to assist the commission in ensuring the integrity of the game or to improve state-funded services related to responsible gambling and gambling addiction. The data would not be a public record, and the state university or gambling neutral organization would not disclose the data to any person, except for the purpose of conducting approved research, as part of a peer-reviewed research report, or pursuant to an agreement between the state university/gambling neutral organization and the sports gaming proprietor.

These provisions would mirror the states of Ohio and Massachusetts, two states that have enacted strong consumer protections pertaining to gambling.

In so many ways mobile betting already presents challenges to those most vulnerable to addiction, while also opening a gateway to data collection not readily available through casinos unless players use a player's card. Operators and their licensees will be collecting quite a bit of data that can help answer many questions that researchers have concerning gambling behaviors and can provide insights into whether more individuals are becoming addicted to gambling.

Without access to anonymized player data, we are denied the ability to discern the real impacts. As technology becomes more sophisticated, algorithms are designed to tailor to individual players almost in real time. Learning what games a player likes to play, what kind of bets they make, how much they've spent, how much time they've played, how much have they lost, how much credit has been extended to them. These are important data points to be able to track and gauge over time the effects of gambling on Minnesotans.

You may not be aware but there are no federal dollars set aside for gambling addiction. It's up to each state to decide to fund research, prevention and treatment. We've done very little in this state because there just hasn't been enough support to investigate the questions we have about gambling addiction. With so much data being collected by the various licensees it's important that the state negotiates access to aggregate player data. We ask that a provision be added to create a mutually beneficial arrangement for state universities and independent, gambling neutral organizations to request access to the data in order to determine the impact that mobile sports betting is having on Minnesotans.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.