



**Maine Medical  
Association**



**TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION  
AND  
THE MAINE OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION**

**In Opposition to**

**LD 1164- An Act to Create Economic Opportunity for the Wabanaki Nations Through  
Internet Gaming**

Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs  
Room 437, State House, Augusta, Maine  
Monday, March 31st, 2025

Good Afternoon, Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs. My name is Patty Hymanson. I live in York, am a physician, and was a past-Maine State Representative from 2015-2022. I am testifying in opposition to LD 1164 An Act to Create Economic Opportunity for the Wabanaki Nations Through Internet Gaming (“card game, dice game, not limited to blackjack, poker, dice, craps, roulette or baccarat”) on behalf of the Maine Medical Association and Maine Osteopathic Association.

The Maine Medical Association (MMA) is a professional organization representing more than 4,000 physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine. MMA’s mission is to support Maine physicians, advance the quality of medicine in Maine, and promote the health of all Maine people. The Maine Osteopathic Association (MOA) is a professional organization representing more than 1,200 osteopathic physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine whose mission is to serve the Osteopathic profession of the State of Maine through a coordinated effort of professional education, advocacy, and member services in order to ensure the availability of quality osteopathic health care to the people of this State.

The MMA and MOA’s legislative committees have joined to advocate with one voice in opposition to LD 790.

I am speaking as a mother of two men in their 30s who grew up in Maine and as a neurologist who practiced in- and out-patient adult neurology on the Seacoast for 28 years. Also, to be clear, I have won money at the blackjack tables in Las Vegas and have followed my sons' fantasy Football journeys. I am not against gambling. But there are limits that online casino games would cross.

Since Michigan legalized online casino games and sports betting in 2021, calls to the gambling addiction hotline have tripled. Two-thirds of these calls are from men, 30% in

their 30s, and 21% are in their 40s.<sup>1</sup> My sons talk about how easy it is to have a phone with an app always around and how friends have been compelled to use the app too much. My son said, “There are so many things that are bad in excess. Gambling is one of them.” He asked, “What are some other options on the table to bring revenue to Maine?” And while I don’t have a direct answer for him, allowing a strong source of addiction into our state to bring revenue, no matter who it goes to, should not be one of them.

As a neurologist, I am aware that some brains are primed for addictions of all types. A gambling addiction is one of them. To demonstrate how physiologic this addiction is, I’ll tell you about a patient of mine with Parkinson’s Disease and gambling addiction. He liked to gamble for fun, but when I started a type of neurotransmitter medication for his Parkinson’s Disease symptoms, the gambling turned into an addiction, and he lost a lot of money. Stopping the medication tamped the compulsion down. My point is that a gambling addiction has a physiological component linked to neurotransmitters. It is a real entity and carries a high suicide rate because of shame, indebtedness, and other harms.<sup>2</sup>

If you feel that bringing internet casino gambling into Maine is the right thing to do, which I do not, please be sure to find a funding source to identify and treat increased gambling addiction. In Maine, we do not have an adequate workforce to treat behavioral health problems as it is. Before adding Mainers and their families who will be hurt by this addiction, make sure there is a behavioral health system that can help to catch them.

Thank you for your attention and consideration. I’ll answer questions or find sources.

Patty Hymanson, MD

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<sup>1</sup>Check out this multi-series from the Wall Street Journal for more information -

<https://www.wjr.com/2025/02/21/all-in-wjr-explores-online-gambling-addiction-in-michigan/>

<sup>2</sup> Marionneau V, Nikkinen J. Gambling-related suicides and suicidality: A systematic review of qualitative evidence. *Front Psychiatry*. 2022 Oct 26;13:980303. doi: 10.3389/fpsy.2022.980303. PMID: 36387006; PMCID: PMC9645554. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9645554/pdf/fpsy-13-980303.pdf>