

To: Co-chairs: The Honorable Craig Hickman and The Honorable Laura Supica

Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

Date: January 15, 2025

RE: LD 1902 *An Act to Support Nonprofit Organizations by Authorizing the Operation of Electronic Lucky Seven Devices and Similar Sealed Ticket Games*

My name is Lori Manson from Bowdoin, Maine. I am a board member of the all-volunteer Maine Council on Problem Gambling (MCPG), and I am the Maine representative and past chair of the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) State Affiliates Committee. I am an active participant in the Northeast Consortium on Problem Gambling, and I was recently elected to serve on the Board of Directors of the National Council on Problem Gambling. I am employed as the Problem Gambling Services Coordinator at ADEPT Maine (formerly AdCare), the Augusta non-profit with the contract with Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention to administer problem gambling services for the State of Maine.

MCPG, NCPG, and ADEPT are all gambling neutral. We are neither for nor against legalized gambling. It is our goal that all legislation and rules are written with best practices in reducing the harm of gambling addiction in mind, and that enough money is allocated to raise awareness and provide services through the spectrum of research, prevention, intervention, treatment, recovery, and workforce development.

At the public hearing, there was mention of an agreement for compromise language that would provide a percentage of the proceeds to be distributed to the Maine Milk Pool, the Sire Stakes Fund, and several other groups seeking to get a share of the revenue generated. I just wanted to remind the committee that if there is going to be a funding cascade attached to this bill, it is best practice on any gambling revenue to set aside at least 1% to Maine's **Gambling Addiction Prevention and Treatment Fund established by Title 5, section 20006-B**. If profit is going to be generated on a product with the potential for addiction, it makes sense to set aside a small portion of profits to help address the potential harm. This fund is used to help raise awareness, run prevention programs, and pay for counseling and other services for those impacted by gambling harm.

When I read a gambling bill, I analyze if the bill properly addresses the things we look at for best practices in reducing gambling harm. For LD1902, here's what I found:

Is there a Minimum Age Requirement 21? No, in LD 1902 the minimum age is set at 18.

Research shows that youth and young adults are disproportionately impacted by gambling addiction, in part because the frontal lobe of the brain is still developing.

Will there be diligent oversight to ensure that underage persons and individuals on the Maine Self-Exclusion List are not gambling on the machines? My concern here is how these machines will be monitored in the varying types of facilities where they will be located. Within the casinos, I have no concern knowing that patrons show ID at the door and the staff is well-trained in enforcing

requirements. Will the facilities that house these machines, which are basically slot machines, have the same level of training and commitment to enforcement to ensure the safety of the public?

I don't see any mention of the requirement to **make the problem gambling helpline information available**, but I hope that would come during the rule-making process, if this bill is passed.

I was asked how I would expect passage of LD 1902 to impact problem gambling. Though any gambling activity will have a negative impact and create problems in a small percentage of participants, I wouldn't expect this to create a noticeable spike in problem gambling in our state. As Director Champion has mentioned in his testimony, people tend to have a certain form of gambling that appeals to them and other types often don't interest them. What we may see here is that some people who previously enjoyed paper pull-tabs may not be interested in the machines. Also, people who didn't care for pull-tabs may be more drawn to the machines which are very similar to slot machines. Because of the faster speed of play and arousal of the body's reward system, the machines would be considered to be more risky than pull-tabs from an addiction standpoint. Again, this will impact some people negatively, but I don't foresee such large numbers participating in these games (as compared to what we see in online sports betting and will see in online casino games) that it will create a noticeable spike in people seeking help for gambling addiction.

From a general understanding of problem gambling in Maine, so far, we have not had the resources to do research about the prevalence of problem gambling in our state. Our best estimate is provided by the data we get from the annual **Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)**: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/data-reports/population-health/behavioral-risk-factor-surveillance-survey-brfss>

If you aren't familiar with the BRFSS, according to the website:

"BRFSS is the world's largest, on-going telephone health survey system, tracking health conditions and risk behaviors throughout the United States and its territories.

Since 1987 Maine BRFSS has provided state-specific information about health issues such as asthma, diabetes, health care access, alcohol use, hypertension, obesity, cancer screening, nutrition and physical activity, tobacco use, and many more. Federal, state and local health officials, and researchers use this information to track health risks, identify emerging problems, prevent disease, and improve treatment. **Each year over 10,850 Maine adult, non-institutionalized residents are called to participate in this important survey.**"

BRFSS Question asked on the Maine survey: [Has the money or time that you spent gambling led to financial problems or problems in your family, work, school or personal life?](#)

Maine adults reporting problem gambling in 2023 was 1.6%, up from 1.1% in 2021. If you apply 1.6% to the Maine adult population using 2020 Census Data, the number is around [16,980 Maine adults experiencing gambling problems](#). Another number that I've heard people quote is that an estimated 25,000 Mainers are struggling with a gambling problem.

That's double what the BRFSS says, so where did that come from? That figure came from **2021 Survey of Publicly Funded Problem Gambling Services in the United States** which stated on page 99, "An estimated 2.2% of Maine adults (24,647) are believed to manifest a gambling problem in Maine." That figure was obtained by multiplying a national estimate of problem gambling prevalence (2.2% times Maine census data). Until we can afford to fund a prevalence survey, we will need to use these numbers as estimates when we are trying to understand how many Mainers are impacted by gambling harm.

Since these machines will be located, in some instances, in facilities which are frequented by veterans, I'd also like to see something that helps raise awareness that veterans are at an increased risk of experiencing gambling harm, such as staff training and/or making signage or educational materials are available.

According to the National Council on Problem Gambling

(<https://www.ncpgambling.org/advocacy/gambling-addiction-research-armed-forces/>)

- Service members experience gambling addiction at twice the rate of the civilian population.
- Young male servicemembers (ages 18–29) are at the highest risk for developing a gambling problem.
- Military-related risk factors include high-risk decision-making, PTSD, depression, and chronic stress.
- Without treatment, gambling addiction can lead to severe consequences such as financial ruin, relationship breakdown, substance use, and suicide.
- Veterans with gambling problems are 6 times more likely to have experienced homelessness in their lifetime.
- An estimated 40% of Veterans and servicemembers who seek treatment for gambling addiction report having attempted suicide.
- The suicide rate among those with a gambling addiction is as much as 15 times higher than among those without the condition.

I have resources I can recommend if anyone would like more information about problem gambling in the military and veteran populations.

I have attached an updated document with Maine gambling data.

I am happy to answer any further questions. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

Lori Manson

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The Maine Council on Problem Gambling

MCPG is an all-volunteer 501(c)3 non-profit.

Mission

To raise awareness about and reduce the impact of gambling problems.

Vision

The Maine Council on Problem Gambling's vision of success is that Maine people will recognize and address gambling problems and their impact on individuals, families, businesses, and communities.

Areas of Focus

- Advocate for increased public awareness of problem gambling
- Collaborate with community partners through education and prevention programs
- Support referral services for problem gambling and affected others
- Support treatment and recovery options for problem gamblers and their families
- Encourage research on problem gambling in Maine

Learn more

Visit: maineproblemgambling.org

Email: maineproblemgambling@gmail.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MaineCouncilProblemGambling>



MCPG is the Maine State Affiliate of the National Council On Problem Gambling (NCPG)

According to NCPG:

- The national annual social cost of problem gambling is \$14 billion.
- 9 million American adults suffer from gambling addiction.
- There are currently no federal funds designated for problem gambling treatment or research, unlike the billions in funding for alcohol, tobacco, and drug addiction.
- Problem gambling doesn't just affect the individual—it has a ripple effect that impacts friends, family, and loved ones. Gambling problems can lead to financial strain, legal troubles, job loss, and damage to personal relationships
- Learn more at ncpgambling.org

See Maine Problem Gambling statistics on the other side

Problem Gambling in Maine by the Numbers

updated January 2026

 79%	Percentage of Mainers who gamble within a year. 2018 National Survey on Gambling Attitudes and Gambling Experiences	
 1.6% Up from 1.29%	Percentage of Maine adults who said the money or time they spent gambling led to financial problems or problems in family, work, school or personal life. 2023 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)	
 3.9% Up from 3.0%	Percentage of all Maine high school students who said the money or time they spent gambling led to financial problems or problems in family, work, school, or personal life. 2025 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey Page 934	
 11.1% Up from 8.8%	Percentage of Maine high school students who report gambling & said the money or time they spent gambling led to financial problems or problems in family, work, school, or personal life. 2025 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey Page 938	
 144 Up from 117	Number of problem gambling intakes recorded by Call Specialists at 211, Maine's Problem Gambling Helpline in 2025. Data provided by 211 Maine	
 165 Down from 172	Number of people who signed up for Maine's Casino Self-Exclusion list in 2024. Data provided by Maine Gambling Control Unit	
 36th	Maine's rank in per capita spending on problem gambling services. 2023 Budget Update: Publicly Funded Problem Gambling Services in the United State: National Association of Administrators for Disordered Gambling Services	