

I am in favor of LD 623 as it will allow Mainers who wish to wager on horse races the freedom to choose among licensed ADW providers and remove the anomalous monopoly provision of the current law that permits only a single, State-selected ADW to operate in Maine.

I became interested in this matter when the two ADW accounts that I had had for several years were suddenly closed in 2019. In contacting my ADW providers, I was informed that this action was taken in response to an "Educational Letter" sent by the Executive Director of the Gambling Control Board in May 2019. Befuddled by this, I was surprised subsequently to learn of the highly unusual law governing ADW that had been approved by the Maine Legislature in 2016.

So far as I have been able to ascertain, Maine is the only State in the country that permits ADW yet restricts the business to a single, State-selected provider. There are at least five or six major ADW providers in the United States; they all operate in the same way in terms of collecting deposits and wagers, maintaining client accounts and disbursing funds. However, they compete in terms of new deposit offers, special inducements on particular types of wagers, tracks covered, provision of past performance information on the races, quality of customer interface and reward programs. Maine consumers, like those in other States, should be free to make their own choices about which ADW provider best suits their needs, so long as the provider meets the threshold to be licensed. I can think of no compelling reason for the State to restrict choice in this area.

Furthermore, competition with an increased number of providers will almost certainly result in more revenue for the State than the present arrangements. It will also decrease reputational risk inherent in State selection of a single provider. The benefits of a market-focused approach are clear and should not be controversial.

LD 623 will enable Maine to rid itself of a misguided ADW regime which benefits only the selected monopolist and is in the broader interests of neither the State nor its citizens who choose to use ADW services. I hope LD 623 will be approved and signed into law.