



Maine Council on Problem Gambling

To: Co-chairs: The Honorable Craig Hickman and The Honorable Laura Supica
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

Date: March 17, 2025

RE: **LD 835** An Act to Allow Children to Participate in Beano Games Conducted by Nonprofit Charitable Organizations

My name is Lori Manson, and I'm a board member of the all-volunteer [Maine Council on Problem Gambling](#). My position in my "day job" is the Problem Gambling Services Coordinator at AdCare, the non-profit with the contract from Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention to administer problem gambling services for the State of Maine. I'm the only person who works full-time on problem gambling in Maine, and it is one of my personal goals this year to serve as a resource for this committee, when it would be helpful, for any bills related to gambling in our state.

I am here to testify "neither for nor against" LD835. I see my role as one to provide information that may be useful as you make your decision rather than to tell you how to vote.

For your consideration, I want to provide you with information from the [2023 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey](#). **Three percent (3%)** of Maine High School students answered "Yes" to the following question:

"Has the money or time that you spent on gambling led to financial problems or problems in your family, work, school, or personal life?"

That 3% pertains to all high school students, whether they reported ever gambling or not. If you look at the same question, only applied to students who reported they have ever gambled, 8.8% of those students said "Yes" to the question about gambling causing problems in their life.

Since gambling is a hidden addiction, I just want to make you aware that there are young people in Maine who are experiencing harm from gambling problems.

Also, consider that this generation is frequently exposed to gambling, such as in sports betting ads and the many gambling elements embedded in video games. People with gambling addiction often report that their first gambling experience occurred around the age of 10. Children are often exposed to gambling by well-meaning adults who want to do something fun but are unaware of the risks of gambling addiction.

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

See attached pages for answers to questions asked during the hearing.

Lori Manson

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Question: **When will the 2024 data for the Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey be available?**

Upon examining the website, I see that the MIYHS is conducted every other year. The 2025 data is being collected now, and is expected to be released in December 2025.

Question: **Are you aware that is legal in Maine for lottery tickets to be given as gifts to minors?**

We are definitely aware of that. That is why every year we participate in the [Annual Gift Responsibly](#) campaign, along with the [National Council on Problem Gambling](#) and the [North American Association of State and Provincial Lotteries](#). We participated in the 2024 campaign, as in previous years, with frequent social media posts, a press release, newsletter articles, and blog posts suggesting fun, easy gifts to buy without encouraging gambling.

Below you will find the text of the 2024 press release:

Do you buy lottery tickets for the kids' stockings? This advice may come as a big surprise. Age-Appropriate Gifts are Better Options for the Holidays

12.13.24

Research shows that early childhood gambling experiences, including those with lottery products, can be a risk factor for gambling problems later in life. This holiday season, give a child a gift, not a lottery ticket – and have a conversation with your family about the risks of underage gambling.

“I remember the first time I heard that giving kids lottery tickets as gifts could be harmful,” said Lori Manson, Problem Gambling Services Coordinator at AdCare Maine and board member of the Maine Council on Problem Gambling. “It seems like such a harmless tradition and so many people do it. It came as a big surprise that childhood lottery exposure is linked to gambling addiction.”

According to the [National Council on Problem Gambling \(NCPG\)](#), approximately 60 percent of high-school-aged adolescents report having gambled for money during the past year. Four to six percent of adolescents presently have a serious problem with gambling. The teen brain is susceptible to addiction, and gambling problems are linked to lower grades, use of alcohol and drugs, and mental health problems including depression and anxiety.

Research linking early exposure to gambling to future problem gambling and other risky behaviors inspired the Gift Responsibly Campaign to raise awareness about the risks of underage lottery play during the winter holiday season and other occasions throughout the year. Each year, the Maine Council on Problem Gambling and AdCare Maine Problem Gambling Services join the National Council on Problem Gambling and lotteries from around the country to educate the public that lottery tickets aren't child's play.

“The potential long-term risks associated with underage gambling exposure cannot be understated,” said Keith Whyte, NCPG Executive Director. “We applaud AdCare and the Maine Council on Problem Gambling for their commitment to raising awareness about the risks of youth gambling and for working to educate the community that lottery tickets are never appropriate gifts for children.”

Learn more about youth gambling at maineproblemgambling.org. If you or someone you know, no matter what the age, has a gambling problem, in Maine, call 211 or text your zip code to 898-211.

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About the Maine Council on Problem Gambling

The Maine Council on Problem Gambling is a volunteer-driven 501(c)3 non-profit committed to working with other organizations and individuals to reduce problem gambling and its impact on Maine's individuals, families, and communities. Learn more at maineproblemgambling.org

About AdCare Educational Institute of Maine

The mission of AdCare Educational Institute is to advance knowledge, skills, and awareness in the prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery of substance use disorders, behavioral health, and related public health issues. AdCare's Problem Gambling Services program provides education on problem gambling, manages problem gambling services including online and community self-exclusion services for casino and sports wagering, as well oversight of the Gambling Addiction Treatment Network. Learn more at adcareme.org/problem-gambling.

About the National Council on Problem Gambling

The National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) is neutral on legalized gambling. Based in Washington DC, NCPG is the only national nonprofit organization that seeks to minimize the economic and social costs associated with gambling addiction. If you or someone you know may have a gambling problem, contact the National Problem Gambling Helpline, which offers hope and help without stigma or shame. Call or text 1-800-GAMBLER or visit www.1800gamblerchat.org. Help is available 24/7 – it is free and confidential.

Lori Manson
Maine Council on Problem Gambling
LD 835

This is the written testimony that was requested to go with my verbal testimony
presented on Zoom