



JOHN J. VIOLA
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
26th District

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE OF DELAWARE
411 LEGISLATIVE AVENUE
DOVER, DELAWARE 19901

COMMITTEES
Gaming & Parimutuels, Chair
Revenue and Finance, Chair
Telecommunication/Internet &
Technology

Gaming & Parimutuels Committee Meeting Minutes

5.8.19

Chair Viola called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m. Members present included Vice Chair Bennett and Reps. Dukes and Minor-Brown.

Chair Viola introduced **HB 131, AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 29 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO LOTTERIES**. He said the Advisory Council on Video Lottery Planning and the Advisory Council on Charitable Gaming Planning were formed many years ago when gaming was still forming in the state. The bill reduces the required number of annual meetings to 1 for each council, with the ability to meet more often. The bill also permits the lottery to independently prohibit an individual from participating in sports games, if the individual's participation would denigrate or undermine the soundness, financial stability, or reputation of the lottery.

Deputy Secretary Rebecca Goldsmith of the Department of Finance stated that the Department received feedback from the charitable gaming industry and video lottery industry that the number of mandatory meetings for those advisory councils were too much because the creation of the councils and the industries occurred simultaneously, and the advice of the councils was necessary to form proper protocol. She added that the Department realized, after a year of the sports lottery, that it needs a new tool to protect the state, if necessary, from individuals that could bring down the lottery's stock.

Chair Viola requested a motion.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Bennett and seconded by Rep. Dukes to release HB 131 from committee; motion carried. Yes= 4 (Viola, Bennett, Dukes, Minor-Brown); No= 0; Absent= 4 (Longhurst, Mitchell, Morris, Short). HB 131 was released from committee with a F=3, M=4, U=0 vote.

Chair Viola requested the representatives from the Delaware Council on Gambling Problems come forward for their presentation.

Executive Director Arlene Simon of the Delaware Council on Gambling Problems introduced herself and Jerry Tiano, assistant to the executive director of the Delaware Council on Gambling Problems.

Ms. Simon stated they are gambling neutral and do not take a stand on gambling problems.

Ms. Simon said the mission of the Council is to raise public awareness of gambling problems, develop a system of services for people with gambling problems and their loved ones, and provide educational programs.

Mr. Tiano stated their commitment is to help Delawareans and anyone who gambles in Delaware that has a problem.

Mr. Tiano displayed that in 2018 there were 782 problem gambling related calls. Two hundred sixty-six turned into data sheets where the individual provides them their information, and are then provided with a



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packet on problem gambling, containing resources to use plus the opportunity to see a certified gambling counselor. The Council currently has 8 certified counselors.

Ms. Simon added there is a live person 24/7 on their helpline.

Mr. Tiano continued that 1 in 5 problem gamblers attempt suicide, a higher rate than other addictions. Adult problem gamblers are also more likely to be alcoholics. The expansion of legalized gambling brings more people into gambling and puts more people at risk.

Mr. Tiano provided a study by the National Council on Problem Gambling in the past year in Delaware: 73 percent of respondents gambled, 66 percent bought a lottery ticket, 32 percent wagered money on slots, 20 percent participated in sports betting, and 37 percent spent money on any activity in a casino.

Mr. Tiano said they want to explore alternatives to treating individuals guilty of a crime related to problem gambling rather than incarceration. They are not violent criminals, but problem gambling can lead to embezzlement. The judicial system this century is more likely to see these individuals as troubled rather than evil people, and the council wants to push this viewpoint.

Mr. Tiano stated research indicates 5 to 10 percent of gamblers have a problem or will develop a problem.

Mr. Tiano added they have 12 call takers as part of their organizational structure and emphasized how critical it is for problem gamblers to talk to a real person, when they call.

Mr. Tiano outlined their five major program areas: 24/7 helpline, treatment, professional training, media and prevention, and outreach.

Mr. Tiano explained their professional training program is provided for people to maintain their continuing education unit certification for problem gambling.

Mr. Tiano said there are 17 different ways they advertise through their media programs, including T-radio, their recently updated website, weekly publications, social media, email chat, streaming in Division of Motor Vehicle offices, 50 store front advertisements, press releases, and information in each casino.

Mr. Tiano discussed their prevention and outreach programs. They will go to any community that wants to speak with them including senior centers, churches, and schools. He emphasized they need to do more in schools, and are already present in every high school and some middle schools. Students are gambling at a higher rate than ever.

Mr. Tiano said they have a program to work with veterans and the Department of Veterans Affairs to help veterans who have problems.

He added they are trying to do a lot more work with people coming out of prison and those in the criminal justice system.



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He outlined their program where they go into treatment clinics and are finding that around 50 percent of those people also have a problem with gambling. The Council is currently working to combat this through their program that trains alcohol and drug counselors on gambling problems so they can work on that too.

Mr. Tiano stated their proposed expansions include a replacement for their server and e-mail. He added they need funding for media expansion to operate social media campaigns year-round and increase advertising.

Rep. Bennett asked who currently manages their social media.

Mr. Tiano responded that an outside vendor handles their entire media program.

Rep. Bennett asked whether they currently do social media all year with the funds provided.

Mr. Tiano replied that their social media engagement is year-round, but it could be maintained more thoroughly than currently.

Mr. Tiano added they need to broaden their prevention and outreach programs and intensify their outreach to the Hispanic, African-American, Asian, and younger adult communities.

He said the Council wants to expand their influence in middle schools because there are 35 to 40 schools they are not present in. The more prevention programs will be better for the students moving forward.

Ms. Simon stated studies are showing that students in fifth and sixth grade are already gambling.

Rep. Bennett asked if the Council works with the Lottery Office.

Ms. Simon answered that they are trying to work more closely together. In the past, they did not work too closely together. There are other things they can do together.

Mr. Tiano said they need to expand their criminal justice program including working more with prisons, courts, and halfway houses.

Ms. Simon added there are now two counselors in the prisons that run groups with prisoners and offer individual counseling with prisoners with problem gambling. She said they want to expand this program.

Mr. Tiano stated they want to expand their veterans programs and helpline.

Mr. Tiano outlined their 2 basic funding sources. The Council receives 1 percent of the revenue the state receives from the lottery or \$1 million, whichever is greater. They also receive 1 percent of table game revenue or \$250,000, depending on what is greater.

Ms. Simon said their organization was forgotten when other forms of gambling came to the state in regards to increasing their funding sources.

Chair Viola adjourned the meeting at 1:52 p.m.