

General Law Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5271

AN ACT PROHIBITING GAMING-RELATED ADVERTISING, MARKETING AND PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER

Title: EDUCATION.

Vote Date: 3/12/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/19/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Rep. David Rutigliano, 123rd Dist.

Co-sponsors:

Rep. William Heffernan, 115th Dist.

Rep. Craig C. Fishbein, 90th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

The purpose of HB-5271 is to prohibit the marketing of game wagering activities to people on college campuses. The proposed bill would restrict advertising regarding online lottery ticket sales, fantasy contests, sports-wagering, or any online gambling activity from being aired on state universities' campuses or media outlets. Some argue that online gambling has become an issue for young adults and has subjected them to financial and mental harm. This bill seeks to reduce that harm, particularly on college campuses, where the population can be particularly vulnerable to problem gambling.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Bryan T. Cafferelli, Commissioner of the Department of Consumer Protection](#) noted that the Department of Consumer Protection would be able to enforce a prohibition on displaying, publishing or disseminating gaming advertisements on college campuses, but would face challenges in terms of prohibiting the airing of ads on campuses. It is possible that television and radio advertisements airing within a municipality could not be excluded from airing on college campuses, as broadcasts cannot be targeted to specific geographic locations.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Diana Goode, Executive Director of Connecticut Council on Problem Gambling](#) testified in support of HB 5271 because it takes a critical step toward protecting university students from gambling-related harm. The Connecticut Council on Problem Gambling cites research indicating that young adults are more susceptible to gambling addiction and are highly

impressionable. This, coupled with the financial hardship most college students face, emphasizes the importance of prohibiting gaming-related advertising on college campuses. The normalization of sports betting on these campuses as a result of targeted marketing is another contributing factor to increased risk of gambling related harm.

This bill would prohibit these marketing attempts and ensure that college campuses prioritize the well-being of their students rather than encourage harmful behavior. The CCPG also emphasizes that while HB 5271 is a proactive step in curbing gambling addiction, it is imperative that the state invest in programs and initiatives that educate students on responsible gambling behavior and the potential risks of gaming.

Anonymous

As part of a Civic Action project, a 16-year-old wishing to remain anonymous advocates for increased security on gambling websites such as DraftKings. The student relays a personal story about their uncle losing \$300 after his son stole his ID to gamble on a website, and they cite a survey from Redwood Bark claiming 74% of their school had placed a sports bet despite being underage. Anonymous thinks that increased security for sports gambling websites is necessary. They argue that students of Ledyard High School would also benefit from this bill, as their proximity to Foxwoods Casino invites greater curiosity for gambling and could lead to addiction.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Neal Eskin, Executive Associate Athletic Director at UConn

Although they are generally supportive of HB 5271, they express concern regarding subsection 8, which prohibits the UConn Division of Athletics from continuing corporate partnerships with Mohegan Sun and the Connecticut Lottery. Student well-being is imperative, however the financial support garnered from partnerships with corporations like Mohegan Sun and the Connecticut lottery supports the UConn Division of Athletics' commitment to fiscal sustainability. UConn is against the solicitation of students to engage in gambling activities and asks that there be a distinction between passive advertising and direct solicitation. Additionally, because UConn's sports teams compete at Mohegan Sun Arena and the XL Center, there would be challenges in promoting and advertising these events as a result of HB 5271.

Anonymous

Although Anonymous testified in opposition to HB 5271, they stress the negative impact sports betting and gambling have on underage teenagers. Anonymous cites an article titled ["These Are the Real Dangers of the Sports Betting Boom for Young Men"](#) by Meghan Gunn, which suggests that gambling helpline calls have increased by 91% in the year following the legalization of sports betting in Connecticut. Overall, anonymous advocates for the opposition of HB 5271 for reasons largely unrelated to the content of the bill.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

[Michael Ventre, Senior Manager, State Government Relations, FanDuel](#) supports the intent of HB 5271 but proposes amendments to make the bill more effective and enforceable. Mr. Ventre notes that FanDuel is committed to responsible gambling practices for those over the age of 21, but acknowledges that this bill poses advertising challenges. When purchasing

advertising, college campuses cannot be excluded from the region in which the television or internet advertisement airs. Thus, new language is proposed to address this issue.

Chuck Bunnell, Chief of Staff, Mohegan Tribe

Mohegan Tribe suggests similar changes to the language of HB 5271 as FanDuel, their online gaming provider.

Jody Cummings, General Counsel, Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation

Jared Baumgart, General Counsel, Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation

The individuals above submitted testimony in association with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, expressing support for HB 5271, but calling attention to subsection 8 of the bill. This section prevents gaming-related advertisements from being aired on college campuses, however licenses cannot exclude a particular region from marketing. There is a request to create a “safe harbor” for gaming licensees who advertise through these channels. New language for this subsection is proposed.

Reported by: Aliana Montalvo

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