

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: SB-381 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT REQUIRING PROGRAMS CONCERNING PROBLEM GAMBLING AT
Title: PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

Vote Date: 3/12/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/5/2026

File No.:

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee.

REASONS FOR BILL:

The reason for Committee Bill SB-381 is to help combat the increasing rate of problem gambling at institutions of higher education. In recent years, with the increasing accessibility of college students to online gambling platforms and especially new predictive markets such as Polymarket and Kalshi, the state has seen an uptick of young people in colleges around the state admitting having engaged in problem gambling and experiencing the harm that comes with that, such as financial loss, debt, and social and relationship damage.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

N/A

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Chuck Bunnel, Chief of Staff, The Mohegan Tribe: The Mohegan Tribe expresses its support for the bill stating that by implementing such problem gambling awareness programs in our state's colleges and universities, the rate by which young people are affected by problem gambling can be reduced. Bunnel also states that by allowing non-profits and other experts, such as the Mohegan Tribe, in the field of problem gambling to aid and expertise in this program's endeavor, better outcomes from interventions are likely to result. Bunnel

reiterates that the Mohegan Tribe is committed to reducing the harm of problem gambling and is willing to aid the State as a constructive partner in these endeavors.

Dianna Goode, Executive Director, CT Council on Problem Gambling: Supports SB-381, claiming that the need for the bill is factually proven by data. According to a study conducted by the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, "3% of students reported gambling in the past 12 months. Approximately 17% screened at least moderate-risk or problem gambling. Students in the highest-risk category were more likely to report internet and sports betting and significantly more likely to report a mental health–related hospitalization." Goode also states that with the rising percentage of college students having made sports bets (67%) and betting on their own college teams (41%), this legislation would reduce the harm these activities have on young people who may not be as financially literate. In effect, this legislation would prevent more suicides, substance misuse, and problem gambling harm in our state's collegiate student population.

Nathan Hirschfeld: Hirschfeld supports SB-381, claiming that research supports the fact that problem gambling and ensuing addiction has become a threat to college students, like himself, via isolation due to the impacts of problem gambling. This trend has resulted in reduced educational success rates, rising debt, friendship and human relationship damage, and mental health decline. Mr. Hirschfeld supports his claim with evidence that, according to Psychology of Addictive Behaviors, "91% of college men and 84% of college women have reported that they gambled. Fourteen percent of these men and 3% of these women also stated that they gambled at problematic levels." And, among NCAA athletes, "36% of Division I men's basketball players and 16% of FBS players reported social media abuse related to sports betting."

Chen Jin: Supports bill SB-381, claiming that, according to research, 72.7% of CT college students admit to gambling in the last year. With the rise of Prediction Market platforms like Kalshi and Polymarket, which have gone largely unregulated by Federal entities, the threat to college students is major and impactful. But Jin claims that this measure is not enough to stem the issues at hand, saying that only 1% of students with problem gambling seek help of the 8.3% who meet criteria. Providing information to students alone is therefore not enough to solve the issue, hence a better funded companion legislation invested in researching the public health interventions needed for this problem is deemed necessary.

Monika Nugent, Manager Public Policy, The Alliance: Supports SB-381, claiming that the state's gambling hotline has received double the calls since 2021's legislation legalizing sports betting in CT, over 40% of this volume being from an individual in their 20's. With the aid of non-profits, Nugent believes college students would be aided by this bill and reduce the harm problem gambling has on young people, especially with the advent of "prediction market" platforms which, according to Nugent, efficiently circumnavigate state statute and worsen gambling problems.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed.

Reported by: Tom Atwood

Date: 3/18/2026