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# The \_\_\_\_\_ MICHIGAN GAMING \_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter



## **MICHIGAN HOUSE REGULATORY REFORM COMMITTEE ADVANCES SPORTS WAGERING BILLS**

At a committee hearing on Tuesday, September 17, 2019, the Michigan House Regulatory Reform Committee voted on a package of bills relating to the casinos being able to offer sports wagering in the state of Michigan. The Committee voted 11-2 with 2 passes on the main bill creating the Sports Betting Act (HB 4916), 12-2 with one pass on a related bill to modify the Penal Code to exempt sports betting conducted under the proposed Sports Betting Act from certain provisions of the Michigan Penal Code (HB 4917), and 12-2 with one pass on a bill to place the maximum term of imprisonment for a felony violation of the Sports Betting Act within the sentencing guidelines under the Code of Criminal Procedure (HB 4918) to refer the bills to the House Ways and Means Committee with a recommendation that they pass. The House Ways and Means Committee is chaired by Rep. Brandt Iden (R-District 61), who is the sponsor of HB 4916. In previous testimony before the Regulatory Reform Committee, Rep. Iden indicated that he will not advance the package of bills out of the Ways and Means Committee to the House floor for a vote until he is able to reach agreement with the Governor's office on the appropriate taxation rate for sports wagering. Currently, the tax rate is set at 8% in the draft legislation.

Before the vote, the Committee heard testimony on the sports wagering bill package (HB 4916-4918) from the Michigan Association on Problem Gaming ("MAPG"). Michael Burke, President and Executive Director of MAPG, stated that MAPG and the National Council on Problem Gaming are neutral on the package of bills. On behalf of MAPG, Mr. Burke noted the need for appropriate resources to be provided for gambling addiction and treatment (see related story below).

## MAPG CALLS ON MICHIGAN GOVERNMENT TO ENSURE HELP FOR PROBLEM GAMBLERS

At Tuesday's Regulatory Reform Committee hearing, Michael Burke, the Executive Director of the Michigan Association on Problem Gambling ("MAPG") and a Board Member on the National Council on Problem Gambling, testified. He began by making it clear that the MAPG and the National Council are "neutral on legalized gambling".

He explained that the MAPG is a not-for-profit organization and the state affiliate to the National Council on Problem Gambling. "The MAPG is comprised of a 100% all-volunteer network of problem gambling clinicians, trainers, researchers, stakeholders from Michigan's gambling industry, and individuals in recovery. The Michigan Association does not receive state funding. The presence of a state advocate for problem gamblers is extremely important as most individuals with gambling problems do not seek help due to the intense shame and stigma surrounding this hidden addiction," Mr. Burke noted. He went on to state:

"It is important to note that the majority of people in Michigan will never experience gambling problems, but it is up to the state of Michigan to provide effective, results-oriented prevention and treatment programs to help the estimated 1-2% of individuals suffering the negative consequences of problem gambling. My primary goal is to advocate for services to prevent Michigan citizens from developing gambling problems and to ensure services are available to treat those who develop this devastating disorder."

Mr. Burke outlined some detailed "measures" that state officials addressing the issue of problem gambling (i.e. the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS)) should try to meet. These measures include:

- "designating a senior staffer to be solely responsible for problem gambling issues;

- adding brief gambling screens to intake/assessment and data tracking systems;
- adding gambling participation and problem symptom questions to existing surveillance, monitoring and survey efforts;
- developing state and culturally specific basic materials on gambling addiction;
- developing a plan to train all MDHHS behavioral health counselors in basic screening, assessment, treatment & referral; and
- identifying counselors with prerequisite education and certification to receive advanced training with the goal to achieve national certification and become trainers."

Toward the end of his presentation, Mr. Burke called for the state to explore offering better treatment alternatives for problem gamblers, suggesting that some other states have established residential treatment centers with great success. He stated:

"MAPG and its members would like to explore with this committee, that among the proposed safeguards for this legislation, the need for specific funds to be allocated to offering free, residential treatment for those Michigan residents suffering from a compulsive gambling disorder. States such as Louisiana and Massachusetts serve as great templates and offer residential treatment at no cost to any resident of their respective state."

Mr. Burke has long advocated for the establishment of inpatient facilities. "This form of residential treatment has proven to be dramatically effective. The MDHHS would be wise to explore allocating funding in this direction. The reports I have seen from the state of Louisiana, where such programs have been well-established, demonstrate the meaningful impact that establishing treatment facilities can make in turning lives around. I have sent people from Michigan to the Louisiana CORE facility, and the treatment that they have received has been excellent and effective," he noted in an interview with the Michigan Gaming Newsletter.

Mr. Burke also stated that the MAPG welcomes participation in the group by members of the gaming industry. “We have been blessed to get active participation from MGM Grand, from Four Winds Casino, Gun Lake Casino, and from the Michigan Lottery. It is clear that the industry can play a key role in helping shape better public policy on responsible gambling efforts, and in assuring effective treatment of problem gamblers.” Anyone interested in learning more can visit the [MAPG website at this link](#). A full video replay of Mr. Burke’s testimony to the House Regulatory Reform Committee [is available at this link](#).

## **AMERICAN GAMING ASSOCIATION HOLDS 22<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL RESPONSIBLE GAMING EDUCATION WEEK**

The American Gaming Association (AGA) is highlighting the 22nd Annual Responsible Gaming Education Week (RGEW) this week, Sept. 15-21, 2019. AGA and its members prioritize responsible gaming as an integral part of daily operations within the industry. This week is used to showcase both the dedication of the gaming industry to foster responsible gaming to the community, as well as educate the gaming industry on advancing responsible gaming initiatives.

For RGEW, AGA is releasing the 2019 edition of the [Responsible Gaming Regulations and Statutes](#). This resource is a collection of the statutes and regulations addressing responsible gaming in the 28 states, plus the District of Columbia, that have commercial casinos or sports betting regulations as of August 31, 2019. It is intended as a reference for industry stakeholders, researchers, lawmakers and regulators.

RGEW also provides an opportunity to educate seasoned and new patrons alike on responsible gaming practices. This year, AGA developed four consumer *principles for responsible play* that include:

- Set a budget and stick to it
- Keep it social: Play with friends, family and colleagues
- Be informed; learn the details of the games you are playing
- Play with trusted licensed, regulated operators

To find more valuable information and resources to support the initiative, click on the [Responsible Gaming Education Week](#) section of the AGA website.

## **ASSOCIATION OF GAMING EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS AND GAMING LABORATORIES INTERNATIONAL DONATE \$200K TO PROBLEM GAMBLING CENTER**

In a press release dated September 16, 2019, the Association of Gaming Equipment Manufacturers (AGEM) and Gaming Laboratories International (GLI®) announced they have jointly committed \$200,000 to *the* Dr. Robert Hunter International Problem Gambling Center over the next two years.

The gift was made in part to highlight the importance of Responsible Gaming Education Week 2019 which was organized by the American Gaming Association (AGA) as a national initiative for responsible gaming education, training and awareness that includes participation from many industry stakeholders.

“AGEM has been a supporter of the amazing work done by the Problem Gambling Center in Las Vegas since our inception and our annual contributions over the past 20 years now total nearly \$1 million,” AGEM Executive Director Marcus Prater said in the press release.

This is the first joint effort by AGEM and GLI through the Lasting Impact Philanthropic Initiative to support responsible gaming. Separately, both companies have long histories of supporting responsible gaming efforts in policy and in financial support.

AGEM and GLI announced the Lasting Impact Philanthropic Initiative earlier this year and made its first gift to the Howard R. Hughes College of Engineering building fund at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, which was a \$500,000 contribution.

To find out more about [the Dr. Robert Hunter International Problem Gambling Center, please click here.](#)