

I am writing in support of HCR 16 A.

Some background information:

According to Dr. Robert Swift, Professor of Psychiatry at Brown University. “Drugs, alcohol, and compulsive behaviors such as gambling all release a neurotransmitter called dopamine. This in turn produces reward (pleasure), relief of distress, and a sense that the behavior that triggered the dopamine release is important or valuable. However, over time, the repeated release of dopamine associated with drugs alcohol or gambling causes neuroadaptations (rewiring of the brain) that can lead to the loss of control over the behavior, which is the hallmark of addiction.”

<http://www.nydailynews.com/life-style/health/person-addicted-gambling-article-1.1242095#ixzz2SZHDh82v>

It is surprising to me that any members of the legislature would fail to recognize that addiction is a disease, given that this is a matter of scientific and medical determination, not of decree. Perhaps these members of the legislature who are questioning HCR 16 A are not aware that an addict, by definition and by medical consensus, does not have control over their behavior, and therefore their addiction is a true disease.

I am testifying to remind all that gambling is considered an addiction according to the American Psychiatric Associations’ new diagnostic manual, The DSM 5. In the DSM 5, compulsive gambling is included as the only non-drug “behavioral” addiction. I would hope legislators would keep this very important fact in mind when considering legislation involving gambling, the lottery, and treatment for victims of pathological gambling addiction. Recognition of pathological gambling and all other addictions as a disease, as the American Psychiatric Association does, is only proper.

Thank you for your consideration,

David Elsbernd