



**TO:** The Honorable Representative Alissa Keny-Guyer  
House Human Services and Housing Committee

**FROM:** Jeff Marotta, Ph.D., NCGC-II

**DATE:** April 1, 2015

**SUBJECT:** HB 3317 –Reporting on VLTs relative to neighborhood SES

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Chair Keny-Guyer and members of the committee, my name is Jeff Marotta. I am a nationally recognized problem gambling and responsible gambling expert. I am here in support of HB 3317. This bill directs the Oregon State Lottery Commission to report on the distribution and concentration of video lottery game terminals in relation to the socioeconomic status of neighborhoods or communities.

Research tells us that neighborhood disadvantage significantly predicts frequent gambling and problem gambling. Furthermore, when individual socioeconomic status is low and neighborhood disadvantage is high, problem gambling is at the highest level.<sup>1</sup>

Passage of HB 3317 would increase the transparency of the distribution of video lottery retailers in relationship to the socioeconomic status of neighborhoods. Information derived from this report has the potential to impact problem gambling harm mitigation efforts directed by the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and policy decisions made by the Oregon Lottery. If we know there is a confluence of concentrated VLT retailers within specific disadvantaged communities, OHA could target those high-risk neighborhoods for problem gambling prevention services and develop gambling treatment programs within those communities. Further, this information may be used by the Oregon Lottery as a factor to consider when awarding VLT retail contracts or when implementing other responsible gambling programs.

This concludes my prepared testimony, I would be happy to answer any questions.

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<sup>1</sup> Barnes, G. M., Welte, J. W., Tidwell, M.-C. O., & Hoffman, J. H. (2013). Effects of Neighborhood Disadvantage on Problem Gambling and Alcohol Abuse. *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*, 2(2), 82–89. doi:10.1556/JBA.2.2013.004

