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STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 41
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HB 3317A

May 27, 2015
Senate Business and Transportation Committee
1 PM, Hearing Rm B

Chair Beyer and Members of the Committee,

I am Kathleen Taylor, State Representative for District 41, encompassing Milwaukie, Oak Grove, and portions of Southeast Portland.

Thank you for hearing today HB 3317A, which directs the Oregon State Lottery to report on the distribution and concentration of video lottery game terminals in relation to measures of socio-economic status of the neighborhoods where they're located.

This is a simple bill that stems from conversations Rep. Kennemer and I have had with lottery officials, problem gambling specialists and others. We know where all the video lottery terminals are located. Anecdotally, we think many are in low-income neighborhoods, or areas with high unemployment. But we have no actual facts.

HB 3317 will provide us with that data.

For a little background, problem gambling is a serious issue in Oregon:

Over 80,000 Oregon adults have gambling problems;

Most Oregonians in gambling treatment prefer Oregon Lottery games;

The Oregon Council on Problem Gambling estimates the economic costs associated with problem gambling to Oregonians is between \$330million and \$600million ANNUALLY. That's between \$660 million and \$1.2 billion for a biennium, about the same amount of revenue that the lottery actually provides.

I've posted on OLIS a fact sheet detailing additional demographic data.

Pathological gamblers suffer a high degree of shame and embarrassment. Gambling problems often come to light only after marriages dissolve, retirement savings are squandered, child welfare is endangered, or law enforcement becomes involved. One in 4 gamblers experience serious job related problems; 1 in 10 attempt suicide.

So what, if anything, should we do?

HB 3317A will actually help gather FACTS. It will help us determine what the characteristics are of the neighborhoods where these terminals are located. It will help us identify where we should target additional outreach efforts. It will also help us identify if there are mitigating strategies we could employ to help reduce problem gambling.

We've talked with Lottery Director Jack Roberts, researchers at OSU, and folks at Oregon GIS (geospatial information systems). They can correlate data from the US Census American Community survey with current lottery information, and it will be easy to provide this neighborhood analysis.

The Governor's office supports this measure. It passed the House with overwhelming bipartisan support.

I urge you to move this bill forward with a Do Pass recommendation.