

# Socially Responsible Gambling Regulation

Presentation to the Oregon Legislature  
Joint Gambling Regulation Committee

9/21/22



# PROBLEM GAMBLING SOLUTIONS, INC.

*Your Partner in Reducing Gambling Related Harm*

## YOUR PRESENTER

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## DISCLOSURES

Current Oregon Clients:  
Oregon Health Authority  
Voices of Problem Gambling Recovery, Inc.

Past Oregon Clients:  
Oregon Lottery  
Oregon Racing Commission  
b-Spot



“Like other public health concerns, gambling is associated with wide ranging harms and disproportionately affects vulnerable groups in ways that contribute to and exacerbate existing social inequalities. It also imposes a large economic burden on society.”

— Wardle H, Reith G, Langham E, Rogers RD. **Gambling and public health: we need policy action to prevent harm.** *BMJ.* 2019 May 8;365:l1807. doi: [10.1136/bmj.l1807](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.l1807). PMID: 31068335; PMCID: PMC6506754.

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**“Gambling is being increasingly recognized as a public health concern. However, government policy has employed discourses that align more closely with those of the gambling industry than with those of the individuals, families, and communities affected by the harms of gambling.”**

—van Schalkwyk, M. C., Petticrew, M., Cassidy, R., Adams, P., McKee, M., Reynolds, J., & Orford, J. (2021). A public health approach to gambling regulation: countering powerful influences. *The Lancet Public Health*, 6(8), e614-e619.

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**“Responsible gambling, harm prevention and harm minimization are and must be at the center of everything the industry does.”**

—Paul Darling  
Chairman, Association of British Bookmakers

**“The Commission’s role is not to promote growth in the gambling industry, its focus is to put consumers at the heart of gambling regulation.”**

—Sarah Harrison  
Chief Executive of the UK Gambling Commission

# INTRODUCTION

## **Why this is important**

Legalized gambling presents a public health threat to the entire state, therefore, a best practice approach to gambling regulation should be taken

## **What needs to happen**

Legislation needs to be enacted that sets the framework for gambling regulators to create a socially responsible approach to gambling.

## **Where is change needed?**

The following slides describe five areas where Oregon needs to do better.



# 1

Entities that are charged with gambling regulation should prioritize fair and socially responsible gambling

## Mission Statement Comparison

The U.K. Gambling Commission

**"We exist to safeguard players and the wider public by ensuring gambling is fair and safe."**

Oregon Racing Commission

**"Regulate and facilitate all aspects of the pari-mutuel industry in the State of Oregon for the benefit of the citizenry, the licensees, the participants, and the economy."**

Oregon Lottery

**"Operate a lottery with the highest standards of security and integrity to earn maximum profits for the people of Oregon commensurate with the public good."**

# 2

A portion of all gambling revenues, fees, or taxes should be dedicated to reduce gambling related harms

## Inequities Among Oregon Gambling Regulators & Operators

Oregon Lottery -

**1% of transfers to problem gambling fund administered by OHA**

Tribal Gaming

**No dedicated funding to reduce gambling related harms**

Oregon Racing Commission

**No dedicated funding to reduce gambling related harms**

Department of Justice, Charitable Gambling

**No dedicated funding to reduce gambling related harms**





3

Conflicts of interests should not exist between gambling regulators and the gambling operators they regulate

## Conflicts within Oregon's Gambling Regulatory System

Oregon Lottery

**The regulator is the operator**

Oregon Racing Commission

**Emphasis on supporting racing industry**

*By statute, 75 percent of fees on wagering through hubs used to support racing industry activities. Operating expenses self-financed.*

*"Do you want to be a racing commissioner?" "Applicants should: Be enthusiastic about racing . . Be committed to the horse breeding industry in Oregon . . . Willing to serve on one of three standing committees, Budget, Medication and Horse Welfare, ADW". **No mention of interest in public welfare or consumer safety.***

# 4

Gambling regulatory bodies should develop RG policies, capabilities, and systems that are necessary to make well informed policy decisions

## Progress in Oregon with more efforts needed

### Massachusetts Gaming Commission

The Massachusetts Gaming Commission has a Responsible Gambling Director, Responsible Gambling Manager, and other staff dedicated to responsible gambling policies and practices.

### Oregon Lottery

Responsible Gaming Code of Practice, staff assigned to RG/Corporate Social Responsibility.

### Oregon Racing Commission

Some regulatory RG language, compliance officers review licensee RG requirements





5

A portion of revenues should be earmarked for research investigating public health impacts of gambling and responsible gambling programs

## Recent progress, much more needed

Oregon Council on Problem Gambling Research Center

Recently developed research center. Funded in part from charitable contributions from Oregon gaming operators and vendors. Center's budget about 5% of Massachusetts Commission's gambling research budget.

# SUMMARY

Legalized gambling presents a public health threat to the entire state, therefore, a best practice approach to gambling regulation should be taken that includes;

**1**

Entities that are charged with gambling regulation should prioritize fair and socially responsible gambling

**2**

A portion of all gambling revenues, fees, or taxes should be dedicated to reduce gambling related harms

**3**

Conflicts of interests should not exist between gambling regulators and the gambling operators they regulate

**4**

Gambling regulatory bodies should develop RG policies, capabilities, and systems that are necessary to make well informed policy decisions

**5**

A portion of revenues should be earmarked for research investigating public health impacts of gambling and responsible gambling programs



When discussing gambling regulation in Oregon

## PRIORITIZE SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE REGULATION

Gambling policy makers need to tackle public health concerns and confront the dependencies and conflicts of interest that undermine the public good.

This committee's work is a window of opportunity to change the gambling policy system in Oregon.

# SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING REGULATION

## QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU

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