



Barbara Smith Warner, Chair
Vice-Chair Christine Drazan
Vice-Chair Paul Holvey
House Committee on Rules
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE Salem, OR 97301

May 27, 2021

RE: Support of HB 3394

Dear Chair Smith Warner, Vice-Chair Drazan, Vice-Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee:

As a board member and on the behalf of the Oregon Council on Problem Gambling (OCPG), we stand in support of HB 3394. The OCPG is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, composed of a Board of Directors representing various stakeholder groups, whose missions is “To promote the health of Oregonians by supporting efforts to minimize gambling related harm.”

A state gambling task force is needed to better understand the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of Oregon’s gambling policies. Oregon’s recent liberalization of legalized gambling, including state sanctioned sports betting, cashless gambling, and mobile wagering have radically changed Oregon’s gambling landscape. Not long ago, for an Oregonian to legally gamble they had to travel to a gambling establishment and needed cash in hand. Under those restrictions, about one out of every 38 Oregonians experienced moderate to severe problems with gambling. Problems that had real world social, economic, and public health consequences. What is not known is how Oregon’s new legalized gambling environment, with the ability to use a credit card to gamble from virtually anywhere in Oregon, will impact problem gambling prevalence rates and related government costs and public health.

HB 3394 allows us to take a pause on gambling expansion, engage in meaningful dialogue among stakeholder groups, assess the impacts of our policies, and utilize information and evidence-based approaches to form recommendations on how to best move forward.

To strengthen this bill, we urge the committee to remove the bias in the currently described Task Force membership composition, where legalized gambling beneficiaries are over-represented, by adding an expert on public health policy, a person from the problem gambling recovery community, and an expert on responsible gambling policy and practice.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jeff Marotta, Ph.D., ICGC-II