



**Connecticut Conference
United Church of Christ**

125 Sherman Street
Hartford, CT 06105-2281

**Testimony in Opposition of S.B.540: An Act Authorizing Sports Wagering
and Online Lottery Draw Games in the State
Submitted by, Michele Mudrick, Legislative Advocate,
Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ, April 30, 2018**

Representative Rojas, Senator Fonfara, Senator Franz, and distinguished members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee,

I am Michele Mudrick, Legislative Advocate for the Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ. I am writing in opposition to S.B. 540 An Act Authorizing Sports Wagering and Online Lottery Draw Games In the State, which would authorize sports wagering in the state to the extent permitted under federal law and further authorize the Connecticut Lottery Corporation to offer lottery draw games through the corporation's internet web site.

I am writing on behalf of the 237 congregations and more than 67,500 people in our state's churches. In fact, the United Church of Christ (UCC) is the largest Protestant denomination in Connecticut. Nationally, the UCC has more than 5,700 congregations with nearly 1 million members. In 1974, the assembled delegates and ministers of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ met and voted on a Resolution which call upon the Connecticut Conference to oppose the continuation of the lottery.

We are in opposition to S.B. 540 : An Act Authorizing Sports Wagering and Online Lottery Draw Games in the State in the State. Growing this industry will create more addictive gamblers and unacceptable societal costs. Our citizens are made poorer by expanded gambling. I have heard many heartbreaking stories from pastors, that people often come to our churches asking for money to pay their rent or put food on their tables because they spend all their money on lottery games and other forms of gambling.

According to the UConn School of Medicine, the growing gambling epidemic is hitting lower socioeconomic groups the hardest and the resulting societal costs are being borne by employers, law enforcement, social welfare agencies and the healthcare system. Gambling is a serious addiction that is not often talked about because there is so much shame around it. The National Council of Problem Gambling estimates that one in five gambling addicts attempts suicide, a rate higher than any other addiction.

All of God's children deserve opportunities to live and thrive in their communities. Expanded gambling is not a way to help people thrive. There are better strategies for creating revenue in Connecticut that do not come with the significant downsides associated with expanded gambling.

Thank you for your work and the opportunity to supply written testimony in opposition to S.B. 540.

Blessings,
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