

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on State Affairs
For HJR 155

Compiled on: Wednesday, March 22, 2023 9:56 PM

Note: Comments received by the committee reflect only the view of the individual(s) submitting the comment, who retain sole responsibility for the content of the comment. Neither the committee nor the Texas House of Representatives takes a position on the views expressed in any comment. The committee compiles the comments received for informational purposes only and does not exercise any editorial control over comments.

Hearing Date: March 22, 2023 10:30 AM - or upon final adjourn./recess or bill referral if permission granted

Tim Shinogle
Self
Arlington, TX

I am opposed to any legislation, especially this proposed bill that would encourage the expansion of gambling in the state of Texas. I urge each member to vote no on this bill.

Pamela Shinogle
self
ARLINGTON, TX

I am opposed to any legislation, especially this proposed bill that would encourage the expansion of gambling in the state of Texas. I urge each member to vote no on this bill.

Glynis Chester
Self-Retired
Frisco, TX

I support HJR 155, and I hope you will as well. Although I have lived in Texas for 30 years, I grew up, got married, and started my family in Las Vegas, Nevada. I know all too well what the benefits and drawbacks are to gaming and can tell you that a 5 star resort of type being proposed, along with the guiderails of licensing requirements through a Texas Gaming Commission will be a WIN for Texas. In my capacity as a volunteer, I have been privileged to drive all over this great state and to see many young women with very few "life options". With not enough money for college and living too far from urban areas to get good paying jobs, their future is often limited to being lead cashier at the auto parts store or supermarket. These resorts bring really good paying jobs and upward mobility to anyone who is willing to work hard, and the surrounding communities will also experience increased business growth as a result.
Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sharon Loveall

Concerned Constituent of Rep. Geren

Fort Worth, TX

How is it that Rep. Geren manages to support things that tend to be of use to him in his private life? Otherwise, his constituents never hear from him. He does not answer questions when asked. I am sure Rep. Geren has researched this fully and, in the process, learned how devastating this will be to Texas. Why is it always about the "revenue?" This will cause addictions, lives will be ruined, families torn apart, and the pain and suffering it will cause should be first and foremost on Rep. Geren's mind. Vote no! Texas does not need the revenue or the guilt. Rep.Geren, please start listening to your constituents Thank you for your time.

Jean Davis

Self

Fort Worth, TX

I am TOTALLY against bringing gambling to Texas. With more money we will get more crime, more gambling addiction, more everything negative for Texas citizens. Vote against HJR 155.

Jerry Rubli

Self

Spring, TX

I am totally against this proposal. Gambling is addictive and the notion that certain entities will be given special treatment is not the American way.

Ginny Cross

United Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce

Corpus Christi, TX

Every day, thousands of Texans leave the state to travel to border state casinos, taking with them sales tax revenues and spending. The United Corpus Christi Chamber supports legislation in favor of casino gambling in Texas.

Sue Evenwel

Myself

Mt. Pleasant, TX

Texas has been very successful without state-sanctioned, predatory gambling. This will have devastating consequences, especially when the economy is so unstable. Please vote NO!

Jana Long

Concerned Women for America

Dallas, TX

I ask that the Committee Members and Legislators vote against this bill on gambling due to the dangers gambling brings to Texas families. We need no further expansion of gambling in Texas.

Barbara Claffey, Mrs.

Self-retired-cwa

Springtown, TX

I strongly oppose this bill

Please consider the negative effects this will have on many families

James Byers

Montgomery County Republican Party, Legislative Priorities Committee Chairman

Conroe, TX

Now retired from oil & gas since 2017, I find I can most easily meet with friends, family, and other retirees at a casino, hotel, entertainment facility, such as a Caesars, MGM, Golden Nugget, or Boyd Gaming facility. However, that means I must always leave the state to do so. Interestingly, I have found that at those facilities, at least half of the patrons, besides my friends, are from Texas.

This is Texas, so why are we like a dry county surrounded by wet counties getting all the business? What is holding us back? Fear. Fear of cartel money running local government and politics, fear of lives ruined by a moment of weakness, fear of rampant crime coming in. All in addition to what our state already has to fight. These are valid concerns should we not do this properly – the Texas way.

In Texas, doing this our way, we can eliminate all of those issues, and make Texas a better venue than anywhere else in the country. Here is my proposal how.

First, protecting vulnerable Texans from the vagaries of gambling: Any patron (Texas resident) at any time can get a full refund of losses over the last 30 days up to \$30,000 in a no interest, no payment loan. The patron's name is then placed on a statewide ban from all casinos for life. To be removed from the ban, the patron must complete a recovery program approved by the Gaming Commission and repay the loan in full. This way, in Texas no one's life is ruined by problem gambling.

Second, no cartel money will play any role in Texas because in order to get a license to own or operate a casino in Texas, the owners or companies seeking a license must first be cleared by the newly created Texas Ranger Financial Investigative Unit of Forensic Accountants. The source of every dollar and asset of the prospective licensees, owners and investors must be verified as legitimate - no silent partners. Periodically, an existing licensee must submit to a forensic audit to again verify money coming in and going out are clear of any criminal elements.

Third, no tax dollars will be used to operate the additional Texas Rangers needed nor cost of the Gaming Commission. Annual licensing fees will solely be used for that purpose.

Under these proactive conditions, why would anyone open a casino in Texas? Because in Texas, casinos will not be the new piggy bank for profligate government spending. Taxing entities, including the state government, will only be allowed to tax a casino at the same rate as any other business, excluding the annual state licensing fee. No fees will be permitted, if not also paid by all other businesses. Except, tax abatements will not be permitted for any casino or its operation.

Why would anyone go to a casino in Texas? Because Texas will have the fairest game in the country. Every patron will need to use an ID or Player's card. Every game will track a patron's amount played, lost, and won. Using a phone app, kiosk, or other easily accessible device or manner, the patron will be able to see how much the

Brian Burgess, Pastor

self

Waxahachie, TX

Our Texas GOP platform, and my denomination, the Southern Baptists, and I personally as a pastor, adamantly oppose opening our State to the evils associated with Casino gambling.

Suzanne Guggenheim
Coastal Bend Republican Coalition
Corpus Christi, TX

To Chairman Hunter and the members of the House Committee on State Affairs,

As a long-time Coastal Bend resident, I am strongly urging you to support HJR 155. This welcomed legislation would finally allow Texans to VOTE on bringing resorts and gaming to our state, a change that has been a long time in the making. The Coastal Bend and every area of the state would see significant economic benefits including increased tourism, conventions, and thousands of jobs added locally. Whether you support HJR 155 because it enhances our personal freedom, encourages economic development, or makes great strides to keep Texas tax dollars in TEXAS, I hope members of the House Committee on State Affairs will vote favorably for this HJR and let Texans decide their future!

-Suzanne Guggenheim

President, Coastal Bend Republican Coalition

Katherine Hagood
Self
Fort Worth, TX

I am opposed to Casinos in Texas!!! This money will not be used for our schools - obviously the Texas Lottery wasn't used for this purpose, as was stated. Money isn't the issue with our public schools - it's what's being taught in them that's the problem! Gambling encourages Texas citizens to live an addictive lifestyle. Casinos draw crime, human trafficking and drugs. We have enough trouble with crime, human trafficking and drugs pouring into our borders. Do we really want to encourage more crime in TEXAS? Give another opportunity for the Cartel's to come into our state? Please OPPOSE Casino's in Texas.

MARGARET TANNER
SELF
BRIDGEPORT, TX

I OPPOSE THIS BILL. LEGALIZAIING GAMBLING BRINGS WITH IT GAMBLING ADDICTIONS, DRUG AND SEX TRAFFICKING. WE DO NOT NEED THIS IN TEXAS.

RUSSELL TANNER
SELF
Bridgeport, TX

I OPPOSE THIS BILL. LEGALIZAIING GAMBLING BRINGS WITH IT GAMBLING ADDICTIONS, DRUG AND SEX TRAFFICKING. WE DO NOT NEED THIS IN TEXAS.

Deana Johnston

SELF

Dallas, TX

DO NOT BRING GAMBLING IN ANY FORM TO OUR GREAT STATE. PLEASE SQUASH ALL BILLS SET FORTH TO POLLUTE OUR GREAT STATE WITH GAMBLING. DO NOT SUPPORT.

Lincoln Achilli

Denton county precinct 2101

Dallas, TX

Casinos simply are not a priority, and in times of economic turmoil brought about by irresponsible spending, the extension of vices is neither advised nor necessary.

Securing our elections by tougher penalties for voting crimes and the abolition of digital voting, scanning, and pollbooks

Securing our border

Preventing predators from access to our children in schools

Prohibitions on gender modification procedures for minors should all take considerable preference over gambling.

Casinos are sought by gaming interests and lobbies and are not a priority of this legislature. There should not be any expansion of gaming in Texas until the public has been satisfied that their elections, their borders, and their children are secure from the litany of legislative neglect that has imperiled them.

It is frankly shocking and humiliating that this joint resolution has been written, never mind publicized when significant problems requiring the legislatures attention exist.

Jeanie Beal, Mrs

-self

Frisco, TX

I support this bill on the condition the recognized proceeds are directed to a very specific purpose. The monies must not be diverted to the cause du journey. Whenever you view the cumulative license plates in the parking lots of casinos over-the-border in OK and LA, those plates are from Texas. Keep the money at home.

Andrew Eller

State Republican Executive Committee SD24, Republican Party of Texas, Self

Temple, TX

Plank 79 of the 2022 Republican Party of Texas Platform states that "We oppose any expansion of gambling, including legalized casino gambling. We oppose and call for a veto of any budget that relies on expansion of legalized gambling as a method of finance". Therefore I am opposed to this bill. Please vote NO

Sharon Jones

Self-Business Owner

The Colony, TX

We absolutely do not need gambling in the state of Texas with all of our other issues. I come from Kentucky and gambling has not made it a rich state! Texas has a lottery, and no one knows where the money goes thus the lottery has not done what they said for the schools or the people of Texas when passed. We still have the high property taxes; roads are in terrible condition: to name a few items. We do not need the crime it will bring as we have enough crime in this state!

Carol Cole

Self - Retired

Fort Worth, TX

I am adamantly opposed to this bill. Vote NO!

Veronica Scheibe

Self

Gordon, TX

PLEASE DO NOT PASS this bill. The bill does not help promote fruitful economic development. Texas needs to stay a state where families want to raise their families in a safe and moral environment.

Murray Scheibe

Self

Gordon, TX

Please DO NOT pass this Bill. Texas does not need legalized gambling. I have seen this type of bill, and resulting Gaming activities, ruin towns, cities and areas (i.e. South Dakota and the Black Hills). Monies promised to education, economic development and social programs never materialize at the "advertised" levels. State, city and local governments agencies will develop budgets anticipating the influx of funds from Gaming. Initial levels of funds from Gaming always drop-off especially during periods of economic downturn. This WILL result in deficit spending to address all the promised budget items. It will also exasperate the pressure on rural areas to maintain promised levels of government spending.

Karl Schafer-Junger

self

Frisco, TX

I was living in Iowa in the late 1970s early 1980s when the state legalized riverboat gambling but only when the riverboat was actually in operation on the Mississippi. The tax argument is always used with funding going to children, schools, roads, etc. whatever works. Then, across the river Illinois said yes to riverboat gambling and the boat didn't have to be operational. Then, Iowa changed and connected a hotel and casino to the now stationary riverboat. Long story short...it's always sold as benefiting something everyone can be for. In reality it results in addictions, money laundering, organized crime influence and lobbyists that make donations to expand the "limited action" into a major part of a state's tax base. Put another way, it never ends. Please vote no on this bill. TY Karl

Joy Roberts

Self, Homemaker

Howe, TX

I oppose HJR 155.

Michael Burdick, Pastor

self

Fredericksburg, TX

I am strongly opposed to this resolution that would bring predatory gambling to Texas. Texas has been very successful without state-sanctioned, predatory gambling. This is devastating and wrong for Texas, our families, and young people.

[*stoppredatorygambling.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/2019-Briefing-on-Regional-Casinos.docx.pdf](http://stoppredatorygambling.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/2019-Briefing-on-Regional-Casinos.docx.pdf)

Naomi Narvaiz, SREC SD25

State Republican Executive Committee Senate District 25

New Braunfels, TX

I am AGAINST this bill and ask that members vote NAY. This bill would open the door to many ills to our State and citizens. This type of activity is addicting and does not support the health of an individuals mind, family or community. It would influence negative behavior from those in charge of profiting to those who will fall prey to this type of activity. Proverbs 13:11 says "Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase." A healthy society must reject this type of activity that leads to drunkenness, debauchery, poverty and slavery. It also opens the door for human trafficking. VOTE NO TEXANS do not want this in our state!

Gwen Withrow
self
Montgomery, TX

I am against HJR155. We must prevent gambling from becoming legal in Texas. A lot of evil money is being poured into the State to get this passed. It will not be a good thing for the State and will bring much unwanted consequences. Please vote against HJR155.

Sherry Eller
Self
Temple, TX

Oppose HJR 155 ,
I agree with the RPT Resolution Opposing Casino Gambling in Texas
Resolution Opposing Casino Gambling in Texas
Posted 3.17.2023 - by RPT Staff

WHEREAS, Texas Republican legislators have introduced legislation that seeks to change our Texas Constitution to allow for casino gambling in Texas; and

WHEREAS, the gambling bills now mask the negative connotations of casino gambling by referring to casinos euphemistically as “destination resorts”¹ with “fabulous hotels, restaurants, showrooms, and retail” to attract families²; and

WHEREAS, the usual arguments for opening the state to gambling continue to be, “this will create jobs” and “create revenue” to fund schools and provide tax relief; and

WHEREAS, these reasons fail to overcome the substantial economic and social costs to individuals, families, and communities, including mental health costs, crime costs, business and employment costs, family breakdown, bankruptcy, suicide, and direct regulatory costs; and

WHEREAS, the State of Texas has a \$33 billion budget surplus; and

WHEREAS, the proposed legislation to establish the gambling industry in Texas would violate the free market principles of the Republican Party of Texas by awarding a limited number of licenses to resort casinos who have lobbied and generously contributed to the campaigns of Texas legislators while instituting a politically protected industry; and

WHEREAS, once the gambling industry is allowed to operate legally in the state, its lobbying power will grow and its influence over legislators and local community officials will increase; and

WHEREAS, Plank 79 of the 2022 Republican Party of Texas Platform states that “We oppose any expansion of gambling, including legalized casino gambling. We oppose and call for a veto of any budget that relies on expansion of legalized gambling as a method of finance”; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Republican Party of Texas calls on all Republican Texas Legislators to cease and desist with any efforts to open the State of Texas to casino gambling; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution shall be distributed to each Republican member of the Texas Legislature, to the Governor, and to the Lieutenant Governor.

Christopher Sacia
Self
Austin, TX

Casino gambling will not benefit Texas. It will increase crime, create gambling addicts, and dominate our state politics for years to come. It will financially benefit few Texans, but make the owners of the casinos billions. Please do not advance this legislation.

Mary Ellen Snell

Bexar County GOP Precinct Chair #3194

Boerne, TX

Dear Legislators-

I cannot express emphatically enough my OPPOSITION to the House gambling resolutions, especially HJR 97, and the Senate Bill 715. My fellow GOP Precinct Chairs are overwhelmingly opposed, as are most conservative Republicans I know.

Unfortunately, this year's push for comprehensive statewide gambling has attracted some young, unprincipled, atheist, libertarians, new to the GOP, both morally unprincipled and uneducated. They are rabid for moral/social ills in the name of "freedom". These advocats are trying to undermine our GOP as persistently as the 78 casino lobbyists from Las Vegas Sands/Texas Destination Resort/Texas Sands PAC who have been PAID to sell you their proposals for multi-use developments with a 25% casino footprint, initially located in 7 Dem-led cities, with Cartel operations. I can assure you...this is just a plan to start. One can clearly see the potential for a follow-up long-term growth plan for Las Vegas Sands to take advantage of a large state like Texas, and her citizens.

These desperate lobbyists had the bright idea to recently term their legislation "Family Entertainment". Do these out-of- staters think we are stupid? We need to shun this now. We need to turn our backs and walk away. As God-fearing Texans this is how we handle temptation. Tell Las Vegas Sands NO! to their Texas growth plan. Everyone is following the money. And, it makes the GOP look corrupt.

Abbott took \$1.2 million

Phelan took \$300,000

Patrick took \$200,000

Who else is on this list?

Our State of Texas does not need LVS money. Our leaders don't need LVS money.

The people are watching. We don't want our state to be as ugly and corrupt as the Democrat-led casino mafias in BLUE states. Our citizens will lose, literally. They have a 13.5% chance of winning while gambling. And, lots more to lose in their communities We are at risk with legalized corporate gambling welfare established statewide.

Both our RPT platform and our State Constitution are AGAINST gambling.

I expect you to vote NO to the three House gambling resolutions and SB715. And, I tell you what...why don't you save us all some future grief and amend the language to place a 10-year moratorium on this issue after it fails in your Committees. I have attachments I would like to submit, in addition to these comments

JoAnn Fleming

Grassroots America - We the People PAC

Flint, TX

Grassroots America - We the People PAC strongly opposes HJR 155 by Geren.

Once again, the people of Texas are at a disadvantage when it comes to the hundreds of millions of dollars big gambling interests are ready to spend to sell this snake oil at the ballot box. Look at the history of the much-acclaimed lottery! Did the Texas Lottery pay for Public Schools as we were promised? NO! Annual proceeds from the Texas Lottery pay about three days of the state's yearly primary and secondary education costs, although advocates convinced voters that education costs in Texas would be significantly funded. Source: Dallas Business Journal reported that 1.4 billion was used from the Texas lottery to go to the state education fund in 2018, and according to the Texas Education Agency, funding the state's public school system cost Texans almost 21 billion dollars that year. The lottery would have made up 7%. However, Texas Tribune reported that in 2018, 52.3 billion in state and local money went to our public education system. In this case, 1.4 billion from the Texas lottery would make up 2.67% of education funding., <https://www.bizjournals.com/dallas/news/2019/02/01/does-the-texas-lottery-still-support-education.html>, <https://www.texastribune.org/2019/02/15/texas-school-funding-how-it-works/>

The economic boon of state-sanctioned gambling is a lie. American consumers experience over \$100 billion/year in gambling losses. The American people are on course to lose more than \$1 trillion of their personal wealth to predatory gambling over the next eight years. For every \$1 in new gambling revenue, the costs to taxpayers, DHS agencies, and governments is at least \$3-\$5 in gambling-related criminal justice and healthcare spending, job loss, bankruptcy, and other consequences. State-sanctioned predatory gambling creates no new product. Rather, it preys on the poor. It does not create new wealth. Nor does it build strong families, generational wealth, and strong communities. Source: John Kindt, Economic, Business, and Legal Studies at Emory, Mercer, U.Ga. & U.S. Universities Conclude: Georgia Casinos & Online Gambling Would Increase Gambler's ABCS-Addictions, Bankruptcies, Crime, Sex-Trafficking & Suicides, <https://gabaptist.egnyte.com/dl/YGzUY5Z5sp>

We urge the State Affairs Committee to vote down HJR 155 for the good of Texas and her people.

JoAnn Fleming

Executive Director

Grassroots America - We the People PAC

William Busby
self - political
Glenn Heights, TX

I was on the testify list today but had to leave before I could speak. Here are my comments that I was going to give in Testimony for HJR 155:

Chairman Hunter and Members of the Committee,

I come before you today in support of HJR 155 and urge you to pass this out of committee. Thank you Representative Geren for authoring this Joint Resolution.

As you are fully aware, our neighboring states (Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Louisiana) make a considerable amount of money off Texans when we cross the stateline to gamble. This money goes to the Reservations in Oklahoma, the schools, the communities, and economic advancement in the respective states. Texans receive nothing from it.

Some might say this is a moral issue. I disagree. I am a Baptist, and it's often said that Baptists don't recognize each other at the liquor store or the casino. Others might say that this issue brings crime. That's not true. I was in Chicago last weekend. The safest place in the entire Chicagoland region was the casino. I've felt more uncomfortable walking in uptown Dallas during the night than I ever have leaving Winstar at 3 am.

As per HJR 155, Texans should have the right to vote to establish the Texas Gaming Commission. This will bring Billions to the Texas Economy.

While some might say that the Texas Base doesn't approve of gambling, polling would disagree. In a recent poll, 54% of Texans and 59% of Republican Primary Voters state that they have been to a casino or gambling facility within the last five years. Furthermore, the Dallas Morning News quoted Speaker Phelan in January as saying "I want to see destination-style casinos that are high quality and that create jobs and that improve the lifestyle of those communities." Adding to that, Governor Abbott has agreed that he would sign the "right proposal."

This brings jobs to Texans - giving our solid economy yet another boost. The average Resort Supplier Spend is upwards of \$600M annually. That money pays for external services, such as security, laundry, and transportation. These resorts are dependent upon the services that Texans have to offer. These resorts will also be able to host live entertainment and other community and private events.

I urge you to pass this out of committee and then through the chambers to allow the public to vote on this matter. I'm quite confident that Texans will support this Constitutional Amendment when given the opportunity to vote on it in November.

Nathan Bickerstaff, Precinct chair
GOP
Midlothian, TX

Say no to the gambling in our state. It brings crime increases Poverty, also it Not good for our state vote no