

Testimony of Sandy Games
Information Hearing on Economic, Health and Social Harms
Resulting from Online Sports Gambling
State Senate Finance Committee
January 8, 2025

My story is not about sports gambling, but involves casinos, however, I would like to point out that the addiction is the same regarding of the gamblers type of bet.

My husband is a recovering compulsive gambler, he hasn't placed a bet in over 14 years. This is through the grace of God, hard work, dedication and a 12-step program. Our story with gambling began 21 years ago. We would play poker with friends, go to casinos, play pull tabs, and go to horse and dog tracks, but it was leisurely fun.

Life was going good for us until our son died of an accident in June of 2003 when he was 20. Neither of us knew how to deal with the grief so we found different outlets. I went back to school and focused on our grandson that was born in October of the same year. My husband went to the casinos where nobody knew him or his story. It started out once a week, then twice a week, then whenever he could get away. The bets continued to get larger and so did the lies. Soon bills were being paid late, checks started bouncing, credit cards were maxed, and we had remortgaged our house one too many times. In just 5 years, I lost my son and the man I married, his personality changes drastically when he became addicted to gambling. A once very honest and reliable man became a liar, cheater, and was never there when I needed him. We ended up losing our house, 401K, and filing for bankruptcy and almost filing for divorce.

I am one of the lucky ones. My husband chose recovery. He has worked hard to build back our life together. This is not the case for many friends and family members of compulsive gamblers. Spouses end up divorced, parents and children making tough decisions of not providing money or shelter to their loved ones.

Compulsive gambling is a horrible disease that affects not only the gambler, but also those that love them.