



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI
A HO'OMĀKA'IKA'I

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
DIRECTOR

DANE K. WICKER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

No. 1 Capitol District Building, 250 South Hotel Street, 5th Floor, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawaii 96804
Web site: dbedt.hawaii.gov

Telephone: (808) 586-2355
Fax: (808) 586-2377

Statement of
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY

Thursday, April 17, 2025
10:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 430

In consideration of
SCR121, SD1
**REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
AND TOURISM TO ESTABLISH A TOURISM AND GAMING WORKING GROUP.**

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey and members of the Committee.

The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) offers its support with comments on SCR121, SD1, which requests the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism to establish a tourism and gaming working group.

The tourism and gaming working group provides an opportunity to all state entities involved to get much needed input from the community. Since gaming activities may impact all citizens in the state, it will be pertinent to gather input from as many communities and stakeholders as possible.

A clear line of communication with DBEDT will be key as the staffing for the working group needs to be defined to ensure that the necessary scheduling, management of logistics, and development of agendas can take place.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**DEPARTMENT OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO HO'OPI'I
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

ALII PLACE
1060 RICHARDS STREET • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
PHONE: (808) 768-7400 • FAX: (808) 768-7515 • WEBSITE: www.honoluluprosecutor.org

STEVEN S. ALM
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
LOIO HO'OPI'I



THOMAS J. BRADY
FIRST DEPUTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
HOPE MUA LOIO HO'OPI'I

**THE HONORABLE GREGGOR ILAGAN, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawai'i**

April 17, 2025

**RE: S.C.R. 121, S.D. 1; REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM TO CONVENE A TOURISM AND
GAMING WORKING GROUP.**

Chair Ilagan, Vice-Chair Hussey, and members of the House Committee on Economic Development & Technology, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu ("Department") submits the following testimony in **strong opposition** to S.C. R. 121, S. D. 1.

My name is Steve Alm and I am the Prosecuting Attorney for the City and County of Honolulu. My number one job is to protect the people of our county. This resolution, if passed, would promote an activity that would be harmful to the residents of Hawai'i. Gambling is illegal for good reasons.

The purpose of S.C.R. 121, S.D. 1 is to request that the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism convene a tourism and gaming working group. One of the charges that this group will have is to "...[d]evelop a comprehensive tourism gaming policy framework that would serve as a catalyst for economic growth, job creation, capital investment, and a significant source of tax revenue for the State..." We stand in *strong opposition* to this resolution because it will open the door to legalize gambling in our state. One need only to look at some of the participants on the working group (Boyd Gaming, DraftKings, and BetMGM) to see that part of the intent of this resolution is to legalize sports wagering, a relatively new form of gambling now creating many, many gambling addicts. Legalizing gambling will not serve our community and will only increase the societal harms from gambling that citizens already suffer from because they partake in illegal gambling.

The societal costs are real for many people in our state despite gambling being illegal. In a 2016 article in the Hawai'i Journal of Medicine & Public Health, the estimated "social and

financial damage from problem gambling" was \$26,300,000.¹ This study found that each problem gambler could "cost society \$1200 each year." This was the cost in 2016. Since then these costs have risen which means that we are paying more, already. Problem gamblers also "suffer from other addictions, mental illness, and medical problems", all which "place a high burden on our healthcare system."²

Research from the University at Buffalo Clinical and Research Institute on Addictions found:

- An estimated 750,000 of America's youth — between the ages of 14 and 21 — are problem gamblers (they gamble more than intended or steal money to support gambling).
- 11% of youth gamble twice per week or more; 68% report gambling at least once in the past year.
- Frequent and problem gambling numbers rise as socioeconomic status (SES) declines; gambling involvement tends to decrease as SES rises.³

Recent research by the Rady School of Management (University of California San Diego) found that "legalization leads to more irresponsible gambling spending among lower-income consumers than many higher-income gamblers."⁴ Given Hawai'i's high cost of living, do we really want to do harm to our poorer residents? The research also found that of the more than 700,000 gamblers they studied, 96% lost money to online gambling. Only 4% won and the online platforms often ban or throttle frequent winners' bets. Would Hawai'i want the legislature to legalize something where 96% of our residents would lose money?

Research has also found that legalized sports wagering increases intimate partner violence. "...[W]hen sports gambling is legalized, the effect of NFL home team upset losses on intimate partner violence increases by around ten percentage points."⁵

Just this month, on April 3, 2025, the Mayor and the City Council of Baltimore filed a complaint against DraftKings and FanDuel alleging that their business model and platform are designed to create more problem gamblers, adding to the growing gambling addiction problems in the City.⁶

These statistics beg the question--Why do we need to promote an activity that we already know will cause harm to our citizens? Some will pose the argument that people are already

¹ Piliwaiwai: Problem Gambling in Hawai'i; Hawai'i J Med Public Health. 2016 Mar; 75(3):73-77; <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4795333/>

² Id.

³ RIA Expert Summary Gambling, published April 24, 2012; https://www.buffalo.edu/cria/news_events/es/es3.html#:~:text=An%20estimated%20750%2C000%20of%20America's,%2C%2030%25%20to%2012%25.

⁴ Legalized Gambling Increases Irresponsible Betting Behavior, Especially Among Low-Income Populations; Rady School of Management findings emphasize the high financial risk associated with legalized gambling; June 18, 2024; <https://rady.ucsd.edu/why/news/2024/07-23-legalized-gambling-increases-irresponsible-betting-behavior-especially-among-low-income-populations.html>

⁵ Sports Betting Legalization Amplifies Emotional Cues & Intimate Partner Violence; Kyutaro Matsuzawa and Emily Arnesen; August 2024; https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4938642

⁶ Complaint filed in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City; April 3, 2025; <https://dicellolevitt.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Sports-Gambling-Complaint-City-of-Baltimore-Stamped-Copy.pdf>

gambling, even though it is illegal. However, the illegality of commercialized gambling in our state is the very tool that is keeping many more from participating in it. If we allow legalized gambling and put the societal stamp of approval on it, the many individuals who are deterred from wasting their lives and finances away, will then participate. This is not worth the few extra tax dollars legal gambling would generate.

Furthermore, in Sports Wagering testimony on February 24, 2025, the Hawai'i Department of Taxation said that legalizing sports wagering would only generate \$5.3 million in revenue in FY 2026, only \$5.5 million in FY 2027, and only \$5.7 million in FY 2028. With a budget of \$10 billion for the state; is it worth that small amount of revenue in light of all the problems it will bring?

Sports wagering has the potential to tarnish Hawai'i's love of sports. Do we want fans cheering on the UH Football team or Volleyball team to win, or do we want them looking at their phones betting to see if the kicker makes a field goal or if the serve is an ace?

Finally, given the availability of gambling in other locations, it is unlikely many tourists will be coming to Hawai'i specifically to gamble. Any tourist who gambles means its money not spent on dinner at Giotaku or Roy's, shopping at Ala Moana Shopping Center, or a visit to the Polynesian Cultural Center.

For all of the foregoing reasons, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu **strongly opposes** the passage of S.C.R. 121, S.D. 1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.



Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair
Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair
Committee on Economic Development & Technology
Hawaii State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Thursday, April 17, 2025 – 10:30 a.m.
Conference Room 430 & Videoconference

RE: SCR 121 SD1– Requesting the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to Convene a Tourism and Gaming Working Group – In Support

Aloha Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey and Members of the Committee:

Boyd Gaming appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SCR 121 SD1, requesting the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) to convene a tourism and gaming working group.

Founded in 1975, Boyd Gaming is now a nationwide gaming company operating 28 casinos in 11 states, and has a presence in 19 distinct markets including our online presence in online gaming and sports wagering. Our perspective that we are sharing with you today has been shaped by 50 years of experience in the gaming industry, operating in all facets of gaming including brick-and-mortar casinos, sports wagering, online real money and social gaming, among others.

Our Company has strong ties to Hawai'i, as the state and its residents were a critical component of Boyd's foundational beginnings and continue to be an important part of the Company's success today. Boyd Gaming also owns and operates Vacations Hawaii, which has served over 1.5 million Hawai'i residents with convenient and affordable direct flights to Las Vegas since 1996. Vacations Hawaii is proud to be an established part of Hawai'i's local history, community and economy with employees based in both Hawai'i and in Las Vegas.

We strongly support SCR 121 SD1 and believe this resolution is an appropriate first step for the Legislature to take. Given that Hawai'i currently does not have any form of legalized gaming, the state has a unique opportunity to create a comprehensive gaming policy framework that is specifically tailored to Hawai'i's unique culture and tourism economy. The data, information and analysis done by the working group will be critical to help shape public policy for the Legislature to consider that will serve as a catalyst of economic growth, job creation, capital investment, and state and local tax revenue. Any gaming policy considered in Hawai'i should be complementary and additive to Hawai'i's existing robust tourism and hospitality

industry. However, if done correctly, the main focus of gaming policy should not be solely to authorize gaming, but drive significant private capital investment to build upon and enhance Hawai'i's existing tourism infrastructure while supporting local priorities. The working group could establish a comprehensive tourism framework to best position Hawai'i to take advantage of the intersection of tourism, sports, entertainment and gaming as part of the state's own "Fun Economy."

With this objective in mind, we believe that SCR 121 SD1 convenes a broad group of diverse stakeholders with specific experience and expertise to provide the data, information and research necessary to develop a comprehensive tourism and gaming policy framework as outlined in the measure. Additionally, the timeline set forth in SCR 121 SD1 allows for sufficient time for the working group to meet, research, develop findings, and prepare presentations in order to submit its final findings and recommendations to the Legislature for consideration.

Boyd Gaming respectfully requests that the Committee pass SCR 121 SD1 for the reasons outlined above. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/14/2025 10:36:59 AM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Olderr	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I think it's in the state's interest to avoid gambling because it is an industry that strives for exploitation and predatory practices. We should not encourage state-funded addiction centers when poverty and homelessness are a big concern here on the islands.

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/14/2025 2:00:15 PM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Coralie Matayoshi	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose SCR 121 because:

Gambling disproportionate harms vulnerable populations, who suffer cascading social harms.

Gambling causes increased personal debt and bankruptcies

Gambling increases risk of domestic violence and family crisis

Gambling exacerbates mental health problems, depression, anxiety and suicide rates

Gambling addiction will rise, creating increased social services needs and costs

Gambling increases crime rates, including theft, organized crime and corruption

The Working Group is biased from the inception, as it includes 3 sports gaming companies and no health or social services representatives; its “study” and “conclusions” will not even include these major societal harms nor the overall community costs from legalized gambling.

SCR 121 should not be adopted. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this very important measure.

Oppose Bill SCR121

I strongly oppose Bill SCR121.

I come from a family of 19 children. From my earliest memories in kindergarten, I remember my parents being gone late at night and returning home in the early morning—sometimes after the sun had already risen. That became our routine, our reality.

We later learned they were out gambling, playing cards in hopes of winning enough money to feed us. Though we had a garden and raised chickens, there were often times when the garden was bare, and the chickens weren't ready to eat.

My father worked hard as a laborer in the cane fields and raised fighting roosters for weekend cockfights. If he won, we ate well—sometimes even the losing chicken. But when he lost, things got bad. He would come home angry, accusing others of cheating by injecting their birds with steroids he couldn't afford. The meat was tough, often requiring hours of boiling just to be edible.

When they won, we had good meals. When they lost, we ate boiled greens—whatever we could find. It was slimy, bitter, and hard to swallow, but we had no choice. After a loss, the house would be filled with arguments, sometimes escalating into physical fights. As the older siblings, we had to step in. These traumatic moments were frequent, filled with the cries and screams of frightened children. That was the environment we grew up in.

By the time I was in ninth grade, I had become one of the older siblings breaking up these fights. Sometimes I'd get calls at work from younger siblings begging me to come home. I made up white lies—sick parents, sick siblings—to cover for my absences. Eventually, I lost that job. Our parents were hardly around—gambling at night and sleeping during the day. We, the older siblings, raised each other. We cooked, cleaned, and tried to maintain some sense of normalcy. But we never knew what to expect when they woke up. The fear of a sudden outburst was always there.

My childhood was stolen from me because of my parents' gambling. I credit my older sister for raising me and making me who I am today. I don't hold resentment toward my parents—I believe they did the best they could with what they had. But gambling consumed them.

Gambling is an addiction, not a pastime. It doesn't just affect the gambler—it tears families apart. In a state like Hawaii, where domestic violence is already a serious issue, legalizing gambling would only make things worse.

With so much uncertainty in our government, especially with the ongoing concerns about Social Security, now is not the time to introduce or promote gambling in Hawaii. Many of our residents are already struggling to survive. Legalizing gambling will only create more chaos, more broken families, and more hardship.

This bill is not the answer. Please, for the sake of our families, our communities, and our future—oppose SCR121.

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/14/2025 2:21:35 PM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Rich	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am testifying in opposition to SCR 121. There is no Aloha in gambling. If the issue is to be further studied, despite the numerous studies of the negative social effects of legalized gambling, it should be examined by neutral parties. This resolution invites the fox to help design the hen house, so to speak.

Gambling disproportionate harms vulnerable populations, who suffer cascading social harms.

Gambling causes increased personal debt and bankruptcies. I will add that I have had the experience of providing addiction treatment to gamblers. The most striking case was a woman in her 50's who lost her home and savings through compulsive gambling. I have also seen impact on families when a parent's gambling addiction undermines their finances and destroys marriages.

Gambling increases risk of domestic violence and family crisis

Gambling exacerbates mental health problems, depression, anxiety and suicide rates

Gambling addiction will rise, creating increased social services needs and costs

Gambling increases crime rates, including theft, organized crime and corruption

The Working Group is biased from the inception, as it includes 3 sports gaming companies and no health or social services representatives; its "study" and "conclusions" will not even include study of these major societal harms nor the overall community costs from legalized gambling.

Mahalo for considering this testimony.

Linda Rich

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/14/2025 2:56:16 PM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ellen Godbey Carson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this effort to start up gambling in Hawaii. Please defeat this resolutoin.

Gambling disproportionate harms vulnerable populations, who suffer cascading social harms.

Gambling causes increased personal debt and bankruptcies

Gambling increases risk of domestic violence and family crisis

Gambling exacerbates mental health problems, depression, anxiety and suicide rates

Gambling addiction will rise, creating increased social services needs and costs

Gambling increases crime rates, including theft, organized crime and corruption

The proposed Working Group is biased from the inception, as it includes 3 sports gaming companies and no health or social services representatives; its “study” and “conclusions” will not even include these major societal harms nor the overall community costs from legalized gambling.

Thank you for consideration of my testimony.

Ellen Carson, Honolulu

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/14/2025 4:53:01 PM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorraine Robinson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this measure; gambling

- disproportionating harms vulnerable populations who suffer cascading harms,
- causes increased debt and bankruptcies,
- increases risk of domestic violence and family crisis
- exacerbates mental health problems, depression, anxiety and suicide rates,
- increases crime rates, including theft, organized crime and corruption

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/14/2025 5:04:19 PM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathy Fay	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am opposed to the formation of this Working Group because it includes 3 sports gaming companies but no health or social services representatives; so how can its conclusions include the major societal harms and overall community costs that legalized gambling produces? Gambling disproportionately harms vulnerable populations, who suffer cascading social harms, including:

- Increased personal debt and bankruptcies**
- Risk of domestic violence and family crisis**
- Mental health problems, depression, anxiety and suicide**
- Increased crime rates, including theft, organized crime and corruption**

Gambling addiction will rise, creating increased social services needs and costs

Hawaii does not need legalized gambling.

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/14/2025 5:38:08 PM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Evelyn Aczon Hao	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear legislators,

I oppose Senate Concurrent Resolution SCR121 which proposes that a “Working Group” create a framework to study legalizing all forms of gambling in Hawaii. This working group does not have a single sitting member that focuses on the societal harms of gambling on the community. The focus of this working group is only on the money that can be made for the state from legalized gambling.

I oppose legalizing gambling in Hawaii. Hawaii is in the minority of states that have not legalized gambling and it should stay that way. Gambling is a negative and destructive source for addiction that leads to personal debt, family crisis, suicide rates, and domestic violence.

Hawaii's natural beauty, Hawaiian native culture, and the many other cultures that represent Hawaii are the best tourist attractions. Gambling should not be in the mix. It *may* bring increased revenue--but it *will* bring heartache and despair to families.

Thank you for your consideration,

Evelyn Hao, retired teacher and principal

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/14/2025 5:58:56 PM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Ho	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Hawai‘i State Legislators considering this resolution re: legalizing gambling:

I strongly oppose the legalization of gambling in Hawai‘i. The impacts and costs of legalization include not only impact and costs on revenues for the economy, but on the social fabric of our island state! I foresee a social problem parallel to that experienced by the Native American tribal nations on Turtle Island (the mainland), when external businesses and individuals with exploitative motives enter/invest in the gambling economy. What has happened in Indian Country is that certain members of the community- frequently women and girls- are unwittingly targeted for sex, when large numbers of workers enter the reservation lands, for the purpose of digging pipelines and setting up the infrastructure for exploitation of the land and water. e They are not native to the land they are working; they have to commitment to the native people; their intent is to make money and get out. In the meantime, they look for local women and girls to satisfy their recreational needs.

This phenomenon has been so widespread as to warrant a whole movement to protect **Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women**. Hawai‘i already has an organized advocacy group: **Missing and Murdered Native Hawaiian Women, Girls, and Māhū**. (See the 2024 call for action, below.) The existence of this group should warn us of the risks we would be importing into our already-fragile island society.

We need to *protect* the health and wellbeing of our families, **not subject them to further harmful outside interests**. *The Working Group which is to be formed needs to include articulate representatives from public health and social service agencies, and from the Native Hawaiian community*. I urge you to consider my testimony and its warning!

Mahalo!!

Cheryl Ho, Nu‘uanu

<https://www.instagram.com/mmiwhoismissing/p/C6X1C7xLUFS/>

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/14/2025 8:06:54 PM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jun Look	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The people of Hawaii have said many times no gambling in Hawaii. We do not need tax payers money to fund a working study group. I oppose this legislation.

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/15/2025 12:40:32 AM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gail Yoshioka	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Both House and Senate Resolutions seem to be addressing gaming in general, not just the sports wagering that was introduced in the original bills. So I am addressing the issue of “legalized gaming” as it seems this is the direction that the House and Senate are heading with their resolutions (HCR192 is looking at gaming from the stance that it will benefit the Native Hawaiian population and SCR 121 seems to be focusing on getting the support from the tourist industry).

I continue to believe that legalized gaming will be more detrimental than beneficial for Hawai‘i and that there’s no guarantee that adequate revenue will be generated, as some states have lost money and some have made little revenue. (I am wondering if we will be one of these states.) We are making the assumption that, where there is gambling people will flock. We are making an assumption that legalized gaming will solve our budget problems without much negative impact on our people. There are very important questions that need to be answered with facts backed by research to guide discussion and decision making. Here are some of my concerns and questions:

- 1) What amount is the State aiming for in regards to more revenue and what will this revenue be used for?
- 2) Is it worth it, knowing that gaming will have long-term negative impacts on our residents and our communities?
- 3) Will residents and tourists alike gamble here like they would in Las Vegas, without the added draw of quality food at cheap prices, the glitz, and the quantity and quality of entertainment? Can we compete with places like Las Vegas, or do we even want to compete? Will it cost too much to compete?
- 4) Will those with budget constraints start using their much needed money to participate in gaming activities? Sure, it’s up to the individual to make that decision, but “easier said than done” because slapping a number on a screen for gambler’s anonymous won’t deter the addict.
- 5) Will making gambling so readily available hurt our communities or help our communities? I am disappointed that legislators who are willing to legalize gambling seem to be dismissing the vulnerable people who might see this as a way out of poverty or who are prone to addictions. They are just as much your constituents as any other resident. In fact, you are dangling a carrot in

front of a starving bunny when you make it so easy for those who are so vulnerable to imbibe in this activity (“Come on in! We take credit cards, debit cards, electronic transfers”... you may as well add in home deeds, kid’s college funds, a neighbor’s jewelry....) Expecting someone with an addiction disorder to voluntarily remove themselves from gambling sites and from advertising email lists and look away from whatever might be slapped on a wall in some public space isn’t going to happen until they admit that they have a problem.

6) How much will it actually cost to treat gambling addictions, assuming that 3% out of every 100 people will probably end up with a gambling addiction, as well as provide support for their families (who often go on to abusing substances when a family member is an addict).

7) Are we currently having trouble filling positions in the medical field? (I ask this question because we will be needing more qualified physicians, counselors, and therapists, including those skilled to deal with suicide intervention, and if we currently cannot guarantee that we can fill these positions, we are “playing with fire”.) Letting people fall through the cracks, adding to more homelessness and mental illness and more strain on the budget is irresponsible. Don’t forget that the addict must want treatment before they can receive any. (Sound familiar with the drug addicts on the streets?)

8) Who will enforce all the regulations, and what is the projected cost of hiring people, including more law enforcement officers that will be needed to fight additional crime (including possible organized crime)? Will Hawai‘i be ready to take on dealing with additional crime? Remember, there is no guarantee that we will generate enough revenue to meet all the budget needs of Hawai‘i, Should revenue be short, will money for other programs be used to maintain all of this?

Finally, people come to Hawai‘i to enjoy the beautiful environment including the Pacific Ocean and all its related activities, the various cultural and historical experiences, especially of the Hawaiian people, the various family friendly activities, and, perhaps, it’s many golf courses and the romance. We also have yet to discover how investing in technology (computer, medical, environmental, etc.) might benefit Hawai‘i. (We have “tech giants” and business people who own property here. I wonder if legislators might invite them, as well as the leaders in our communities, to provide their insights and ideas for generating revenue in Hawai‘i that be more in line with the vision of its future.)

What is good for Las Vegas may not be good for Hawai‘i. All involved in the decision making should not make assumptions that legalized gambling will solve our budget problems. They should continue to question whether they are making the right choice for Hawai‘i; its future and its people. I believe that the negative impact on our residents and their families far outweigh the benefits of sports wagering, and what now seems to be, based on what I am seeing in both House and Senate resolutions, whatever is under the definition of legalized gaming.



OPPOSE SCR121

April 17, 2025

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee:

HI Good Neighbor strongly opposes SCR121, which would establish a tourism and gaming working group.

If you believe in a Hawai'i where aloha, connection, and shared responsibility guide how we care for each other and shape our future, please oppose SCR121.

We need to continue to keep gambling out of our state to protect our families and communities. Gambling is a predatory industry that preys on the most vulnerable, destroys families, and feeds social and economic devastation. Once we open this door, we won't be able to close it.

Please heed the words of a Vermont legislator:

"I would hope that just-minded legislators in other states take a hard look at how these predatory contracts extract wealth from their most vulnerable residents. The losses are predictable, and the harm is measurable. No state should rely on a funding mechanism that depends on its people losing." – Rep. Troy Headrick

There's a reason why Hawai'i's leaders, for generations, made the deliberate choice to keep gambling out of our state. That decision wasn't about politics, it was about people. It was about safeguarding our communities, our families, and the values that have shaped who we are and how we care for each other. It was about rejecting policies that exploit pain for profit. It was about protecting what makes Hawai'i special, our people and our values.

Yes, illegal gambling exists here. Yes, local residents fly to Vegas to gamble. But that doesn't mean our state leaders should welcome it into our homes, communities and state. People don't choose Hawai'i because we're just like everywhere else. They choose Hawai'i because we're not.

We can do better. We must do better.

There are better ways to fund our future, ways that don't cause harm. Ways that align with our values, not undermine them.

Please put our people over profits and vote NO on SCR121.

Mahalo,

Christine Otto Zaa

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/15/2025 2:25:28 PM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eva K Hubbard	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Eva Kahapea Hubbard strongly oppose SCR121 SD1.

This resolution, if passed, would promote an activity that would be harmful to the residents of Hawai'i. Gambling is illegal for good reasons.

The purpose of Senate Concurrent Resolution 121 is to request that the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism set up a gaming working group. One need only to look at some of the participants on the working group (Boyd Gaming, DraftKings, and BetMGM) to see the intent of this resolution.

Legalizing gambling will not serve our community and will only increase the societal harm from gambling that citizens already suffer from because they partake in illegal gambling.

I stand in strong opposition to this resolution because it will open the door to legalizing gambling in our state.



Aloha Hālawā District Partners

Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair
Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair
House Committee on Economic Development and Technology

Date: Thursday, April 17

Time: 10:30am

Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Room 430

**Re: SCR121 - REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
AND TOURISM TO ESTABLISH A TOURISM AND GAMING WORKING GROUP.**

Aloha Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee,

We strongly support SCR121 SD1, which establishes a Gaming Working Group within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT). This measure seeks to explore a comprehensive gaming policy framework to drive economic growth, job creation, investment, and tax revenue for the State of Hawai'i. Notably, the resolution directs the working group to examine the potential for gaming activities at the New Aloha Stadium Entertainment District (NASED).

Aloha Hālawā District Partners (AHDP) was selected through a competitive bidding process to partner with the State in developing NASED, a vibrant, community-focused mixed-use district anchored by a new sports and entertainment venue. Given our role in shaping this transformative project, AHDP's inclusion in the working group would ensure that any discussions on gaming align with NASED's long-term vision, infrastructure, and economic goals.

AHDP supports the formation of a working group to explore new revenue opportunities that can enhance the district's sustainability while balancing responsible development and community interests. A thoughtful and well-planned approach to gaming could provide significant economic benefits, but it is essential that any considerations complement NASED's broader goals and maximize public benefit.

Additionally, AHDP has been actively engaged in community outreach, hosting public meetings to gather input and address concerns regarding NASED's development. Ensuring AHDP has a seat at the table would help incorporate community voices into discussions on potential gaming activities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this resolution.

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/15/2025 6:18:39 PM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Tillotson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am strongly opposed to this "working group" on gambling. It's the thin end of the wedge advanced by the gaming industry which will cause real harm to our islands.

Gambling disproportionate harms vulnerable populations, who suffer cascading social harms.

Gambling causes increased personal debt and bankruptcies

Gambling increases risk of domestic violence and family crisis

Gambling exacerbates mental health problems, depression, anxiety and suicide rates

Gambling addiction will rise, creating increased social services needs and costs

Gambling increases crime rates, including theft, organized crime and corruption

The Working Group is biased from the inception, as it includes 3 sports gaming companies and no health or social services representatives; its “study” and “conclusions” will not even include study of these major societal harms nor the overall community costs from legalized gambling.

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 5:03:00 AM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Galen Fox	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Ilagan, VC Hussey, members:

I oppose SCR121.

Gambling is especially hard on vulnerable populations, causing increased personal debt, bankruptcies, domestic violence and family crisis, while exacerbating mental health problems, depression, anxiety and suicide rates. Gambling addiction will rise, creating increased social services needs and costs, adding to crime rates, including theft, organized crime and corruption.

Furthermore, the proposed Working Group is embarrassingly one-sided, with three sports gaming companies but with no health or social services representatives. The group's study and conclusions don't even touch on gambling's major societal harms or its overall community costs.

Please hold this biased resolution, SCR121.

Aloha, Galen Fox

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 7:01:12 AM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christina L Everett/Project Nehemiah Hawaii	PROJECT NEHEMIAH HAWAII	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

SCR121, HB1308, and HCR192 all lead to the same consequences: addiction, homelessness, broken families, and community harm

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 7:36:11 AM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robin Ventura	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am Robin Ventura and I strongly oppose S.C. R. 121.

This resolution, if passed, would promote an activity that would be harmful to the residents of Hawai'i. Gambling is illegal for good reasons.

The purpose of Senate Concurrent Resolution 121 is to request that the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism set up a gaming working group. One need only to look at some of the participants on the working group (Boyd Gaming, DraftKings, and BetMGM) to see the intent of this resolution.

Legalizing gambling will not serve our community and will only increase the societal harm from gambling that citizens already suffer from because they partake in illegal gambling.

I stand in strong opposition to this resolution because it will open the door to legalizing gambling in our state.

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 7:51:26 AM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Roxanne Bell	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Strongly oppose any type of "Gaming." This is a form of gambling. And gambling, betting etc. will destroy people's lives, their families, the communities as well as the State of Hawaii. Stand by your oath to protect the People of Hawaii!! You have that responsibility. DO NOT BE MOVED by what others say or think. Do the Right thing save our State from another form of addiction!!

You want Gaming to bring in income for the State? Get rid of overspending, investigate Hawaii's government. The State and the City and County of Honolulu. Our monies went into someone's pocket, bank accounts. Stop stealing monies from your constituents! NO Gaming at all in Hawaii!

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 7:53:49 AM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
amy agbayani	Hawai'i Friends of Civil Rights	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

testimony in opposition to SCR 121

submitted by Amy Agbayani co-chair Hawai'i Friends of Civil Rights

The proposed working group does not even include representatives or experts on impacts on individuals , families or communities who can assess major societal harms nor the overall community costs from legalized gambling.The Working Group and its report will have no credibility as it includes 3 sports gaming companies and no health or social services representatives.

I respectfully urge you to vote no on SCR121

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 8:11:18 AM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Edward Romo	Individual	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

I oppose of this bill I believe that it's not a good idea for the state of Hawai'i to bring in gambling or any source of that kind. All it will destroy families and destroy the The state of Hawai'i

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 8:39:40 AM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stella Romo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill it will destroy our state due to more crime domestic violence etc

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 9:07:57 AM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brandon Makaawaawa	Nation of Hawaii	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

Vice President, Nation of Hawai'i

In Opposition to SCR121 SD1

House Committee on Economic Development & Technology

April 17, 2025

Aloha Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the committee,

My name is Brandon Maka'awa'awa, and I am testifying on behalf of the Nation of Hawai'i. I stand in

strong opposition to SCR121 SD1.

Let me be honest. This resolution creates a path for gaming in Hawai'i that starts with outside interests. It does not begin with us. It does not begin with community. It begins with industry voices that have in some cases held back letting Hawai'i have this conversation but will stand to benefit the most from these efforts.

This is not how trust is built. This is how it is broken.

We are not here asking for a token seat. We are here to insist that Native Hawaiians lead this process. Because we are the ones who will live with the outcomes. Not just in law, but in our communities, in our schools, in our homes. We will carry the burden of a policy that right now, is

being shaped without us.

You can give speeches, do interviews, and show up to cleanups, but if your policies betray the

people you claim to represent, then all that public service talk becomes a mask for something else.

I believe in economic development. I believe in finding ways for our people to thrive. But I also know that not every door is worth opening, and not every invitation is equal. If this working group moves forward without a clear and formal leadership role for Native Hawaiians, it is not a conversation. It is a decision already made.

When the Senate chose to ignore the House's effort to correct that, it sent a message. A loud one that the strongest voices in the room are not the ones being most affected, but the ones most prepared to profit.

We deserve better than that. And I believe you have the power to change it.

Mahalo for listening,

Brandon Maka'awa'awa

Vice President, Nation of Hawai'i



April 17, 2025

The Honorable Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair
The Honorable Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair
Committee on Economic Development and Technology

**Subject: Comments and Proposed Amendments to
Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 121, SD1
Requesting the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to
Convene a Tourism and Gaming Working Group**

Aloha Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology:

The 'Aiea Community Association is a non-profit community-based organization dedicated to serving the 'Aiea community, including the ahupua'a of Waimalu, Kalauao, 'Aiea, and Hālawā. We sincerely thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 121, SD1, and to offer a proposed amendment to address our concerns.

This measure requests the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to convene a Tourism and Gaming Working Group. Among other duties, the working group would be tasked with examining “the potential for gaming activities at the New Aloha Stadium Entertainment District.” As currently drafted, this district is the only geographic location that the working group is specifically requested to examine for gaming purposes. Therefore, it seems that this working group's mandate will most directly impact the Hālawā and 'Aiea communities.

Therefore, we respectfully request that the Committee amend this measure to include as a working group member a person who represents the 'Aiea and Hālawā community, such as a representative of the 'Aiea Community Association, to ensure that our community is a part of this very important conversation, especially in light of this measure's significance and the potential impacts that gaming will have on the economic, social, cultural, educational, and spiritual indicators that affect every member of our community and society.

We urge your serious consideration of this comment to help ensure that the life spirit of Hawai'i remains in the name and practice of the New Aloha Stadium Entertainment District, and that the project may truly be a success. As an organization dedicating to serving the community that is to be most affected by the Working Group's report, we would be deeply grateful to know that the voice of our community is heard, in the very foundation of the work. We appreciate your consideration of our comments and proposed amendments.



Thank you for your time and efforts representing your communities.

Claire J. Tamamoto
'Aiea Community Association, President

**Kehaulani Lum
Pelekikena
Ali'i Pauahi Hawaiian Civic Club
99-045 Nalopaka Place
'Aiea, Hawai'i 96701
aliipauahi@gmail.com**

Statement before the
Senate Committee on Economic Development & Technology

Thursday, April 17, 2025
10:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 430

Comments relating to
SCR 121

Requesting the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to
Establish a Tourism and Gaming Working Group

Aloha Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and the members of the Senate Committee on
Economic Development & Technology,

Mahalo nui loa for this opportunity to share our **comments** on SCR 121, a measure requesting
the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to Establish a Tourism and
Gaming Working Group.

My name is Kehaulani Lum, and I am the Pelekikena of the Ali'i Pauahi Hawaiian Civic Club, a
50-year-old Native Hawaiian organization chartered with the Association of Hawaiian Civic
Clubs in 1973. Our club was founded by esteemed elders in diverse fields, including education,
business, real estate, health, and cultural practice. We are located in 'Aiea, Hawai'i, the
community which sits in the epicenter of several developments of interest to the Legislature,
including, the NASED, OCCC, the Skyline, and the Pu'uwai Momi Public Housing projects.

Among other things, SCR 121 requests that the Tourism and Gaming Working Group, "(3)
Examine the potential for gaming activities at the New Aloha Stadium Entertainment District."

Given that the bulk of the land that comprises NASED is primarily located in 'Aiea, we
respectfully request that a seat on the Working Group be made for a member of the 'Aiea
Community Association, to ensure thoughtful area representation. (The Stadium Authority set-
aside for 'Aiea is a good precedent.) ACA has a longstanding history and reputation for fairness
and caring for the well-being of the entire community.

Ali'i Pauahi believes wholeheartedly in full, open, pono, and transparent dialogue, particularly, when it pertains to a potential major public policy change as significant to the community as this. In this way, the working group's composition will ensure the holistic outcome intended by its authors, as well as in the Aloha Spirit Law, HRS 5-7.5.

We urge your serious consideration of this comment.

Mahalo nui loa,

Kehaulani Lum
99-045 Nalopaka Place
'Aiea, Hawaii

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 10:00:34 AM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pu'uhonua Bumpy Kanahele	NATION OF HAWAII	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

Updated Testimony of Pu'uhonua Dennis B.K. Kanahele**In Opposition to SCR121 SD1**

House Committee on Economic Development & Technology

April 17, 2025

Aloha Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Pu'uhonua Dennis B.K. Kanahele, and I testify today on behalf of the Nation of Hawai'i, which has long worked to uplift and protect the voices and well-being of our people.

SCR121 SD1 does not feel like protection. It feels like exclusion.

It places the weight of a major policy decision on a process that opens the door for industry first, while the communities most affected are left asking for a meaningful role. That is not how decisions should be made in Hawai'i. It is not how our people should be treated. And it is not what pono leadership demands.

When the House took a step forward through HCR192, we saw an effort to rebalance the process and bring Native Hawaiian values to the forefront. This was a meaningful shift. But when the Senate dismissed that version, it raised a deeper concern. Who is really steering this effort, and why does Native Hawaiian leadership still have to fight for a place at the table?

Some of you talk about standing for the most vulnerable, but then choose to advance bills that hand power to corporate interests and leave Native Hawaiians to fight for scraps. That is not service. That is a misrepresentation.

I also want to make one thing clear. The Nation of Hawai'i is not just here as a cultural voice. We bring decades of experience and trusted advisors who understand how gaming regulation works across Indian Country. We have studied how sovereign nations build responsible frameworks, and we know what proper oversight, licensing, and public benefit structures should look like. This is not new to us. We are prepared to help lead this process in a way that is ethical, enforceable, and grounded in values that serve all people of Hawai'i.

I have seen this pattern for decades. We are asked to wait, to participate after the fact, to trust a system that was not built for us. This resolution does not begin with community. It begins with influence and access granted to those who have not earned it.

If Hawai'i is serious about creating a fair and informed path forward, then this working group must begin with Native Hawaiian leadership. Do not ask us to catch up to a process that was never meant to reflect our perspective. Start with us. Build with us. Only then can this effort move in a direction that honors the people of this land through reconciliation.

Mahalo for your time,

Pu'uhoonua Dennis B.K. Kanahele

INDEPENDENT & SOVEREIGN NATION STATE OF HAWAI'I



EXECUTIVE

Office of the Foreign Minister

41-1300 Waikupanaha Street Waimānalo, HI 96795

Testimony of John Kealoha Garcia

Second Vice President, Foreign Affairs & Commerce, Nation of Hawai'i In
Opposition to SCR121 SD1 House Committee on Economic Development &
Technology April 17, 2025

Aloha Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee,

My name is John Kealoha Garcia, and I serve as Second Vice President for Foreign Affairs and Commerce with the Nation of Hawai'i. I appreciate the opportunity to submit this testimony in strong opposition to SCR121 SD1.

I have spent the last several years learning from Native Nations across the continent who have built their own gaming frameworks. I have seen what works and what does not. I have seen how regulation fails when communities are not in control. And I have seen how success begins when Native people are trusted to lead.

What worries me most about this resolution is not just what it includes. It is what it leaves out. It leaves out a commitment to community-first planning. It leaves out a structure that protects local voices before inviting industry in. And it leaves out a clear role for Native Hawaiian leadership, which should be at the center of any conversation about the future of Hawai'i.

Some of you were raised in places where kupuna are respected, where community pride runs deep, and where leadership was once about putting people before politics. This resolution does not reflect that kind of leadership.

INDEPENDENT & SOVEREIGN NATION STATE OF HAWAI'I



EXECUTIVE

Office of the Foreign Minister

41-1300 Waikupanaha Street Waimānalo, HI 96795

The House version made progress. The Senate's dismissal of that version should concern us all. Not just for what it says about processes, but for what it says about priorities.

If this is truly about building a better future, then we need to start with the right foundation. We cannot afford to get this wrong. And if the working group outlined in this resolution moves forward as it stands, we will be doing just that.

The path ahead should be built with care, with cultural grounding, and with leadership from the people who have been stewards of this land for generations. This is how we move forward, together.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

John Kealoha Garcia

Second Vice President, Foreign Affairs & Commerce, Nation of Hawai'i

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 10:31:45 AM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kathryn mundy	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am Kathryn Mundy and I strongly oppose S.C. R. 121.

This resolution, if passed, would promote an activity that would be harmful to the residents of Hawai'i. Gambling is illegal for good reasons.

The purpose of Senate Concurrent Resolution 121 is to request that the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism set up a gaming working group. One need only to look at some of the participants on the working group (Boyd Gaming, DraftKings, and BetMGM) to see the intent of this resolution.

Legalizing gambling will not serve our community and will only increase the societal harm from gambling that citizens already suffer from because they partake in illegal gambling.

I stand in strong opposition to this resolution because it will open the door to legalizing gambling in our state.

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 12:50:43 PM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James Ino	As a Catholic our value is preserve the betterment for our Ohana but especially for our children. TY	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a Catholic the value of our Ohana especially our children is to preserve a better future for our Children. This bill will cause families vulnerable to be impacted. Please for our Children protect them many times it is the one with the greatest challenges that do desperate things causing severe Regrets and this bill will cause such regrets. Like many of you who love our children PLEASE CONSIDER THIS REQUEST. From a Papa with Love, MAHALO. Jimmy



Iron Workers Stabilization Fund

T. George Paris
Managing Director

April 17, 2025

10:30AM

House Committee on Economic Development & Technology
CR 229 & Videoconference

Re: SCR121- Relating to Economic Development Testimony in Support - Tourism and Gaming Working Group

The Ironworkers Stabilization Fund in strong support of SCR192 HD1 which establishes a Tourism and Gaming Working Group within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT).

Creating this working group is a crucial step in understanding the complex relationship between tourism and the potential introduction of legalized gaming in Hawaii. A comprehensive and thoughtful approach is essential when considering such a significant policy shift. This working group will provide a valuable forum for stakeholders to discuss the potential impacts – both positive and negative – of legalized gaming on our state's economy, communities, and existing tourism industry. The required report to the Legislature will ensure transparency and inform data-driven decision-making.

Furthermore, we strongly support the inclusion of an individual with experience in the area of labor on the taskforce. Labor organizations, like ours, have a unique understanding of the needs of our communities and the potential impacts of legalized gaming on working families. Our members are often the ones who build the infrastructure associated with such projects and therefore have a vested interest in their responsible development. Including labor's perspective is vital for workforce development, community impact, and responsible development.

Including labor's voice in this process will ensure that any decisions regarding legalized gaming are made with the best interests of Hawaii's workers and communities in mind. We believe that a balanced and inclusive approach, incorporating the perspectives of all stakeholders, is essential for the success of this working group. I urge the committee to approve SCR121 SD1.

“We are keeping the pennies and watching the dollars fly away, soon we'll lose the pennies and end up with zero”

T. George Paris
Managing Director

**The Honorable Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair The Honorable Senator Stanley Chang,
Vice Chair Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs**

**The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair The Honorable Senator Sharon
Moriwaki, Vice Chair Senate Committee on Ways and Means**

Subject: Strong Support for SCR121 SD1 - Tourism and Gaming Working Group

**HEARING DATE: Thursday, April 17, 2025 HEARING TIME: 10:30 a.m. HEARING PLACE:
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 430**

**Re: SCR121 SD1 - REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM TO CONVENE A TOURISM AND GAMING WORKING
GROUP.**

Aloha Chairs Wakai and Dela Cruz, Vice Chairs Chang and Moriwaki, and Esteemed
Members of both Committees:

My name is Dwayne Bautista, and while I am employed by the Hawaii Iron Workers
Stabilization Fund Local 625 under the Managing Director T. George Paris, I am offering my
testimony today as a concerned citizen. I am writing to express my strong personal support
for Senate Concurrent Resolution 121, Senate Draft 1 (SCR121 SD1). I extend my sincere
appreciation to the introducer for bringing this important measure before you. I firmly
believe that this resolution represents a critical and appropriate initial step for the
Legislature to take prior to any substantive consideration of gaming policy legislation.

Given Hawai'i's current absence of legalized gaming, our state has a unique opportunity to
craft a comprehensive gaming policy framework specifically tailored to our distinct culture
and tourism-based economy. The data, information, and thorough analysis that the
proposed working group will generate are indispensable for shaping well-informed public
policy for the Legislature's consideration. I anticipate that this thoughtful approach will
pave the way for policies that can catalyze significant economic growth, create meaningful
job opportunities, foster substantial capital investment, and increase state and local tax
revenues within any potential gaming framework in Hawai'i.

Thank you for your time and careful consideration of my strong support for SCR121 SD1. I believe this resolution is a vital step towards a well-informed and responsible approach to any potential gaming policy in Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

Dwayne Bautista

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dwayne Bautista", with a horizontal line drawn through the middle of the signature.

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 3:16:03 PM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Rzonca	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose SCR121. We do not want or need any form of gambling in this state so we do not need a working group to be formed. The people have spoken loud and clear. Please hear us!

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 3:17:40 PM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am oppose to gambling in Hawaii. I've seen way too many families broken up due to it.

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 3:22:14 PM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kainoa Wilson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose SCR 121!!

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 3:38:33 PM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Germaine Meyers	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee,

I'm in STRONG OPPOSITION of SCR121.

Please vote NO on this measure.

Ke Akua pu,

Germaine Meyers

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 4:37:20 PM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Miyata	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

As a child, my dad was addicted to gambling and we lost our Kaimuki home, built by my grandparents because of his gambling debt. My mom had just remodeled the kitchen and my dad forged her signature. They got divorced shortly after.

We don't need a study designed to justify gambling. What we need is bold leadership that protects our communities from the well-documented harms of legalized gambling. **"Hawaii should not become like the mainland states that are now struggling with the consequences of legalized gambling.** We say no to casinos, no to sports betting, and no to studies written by gambling corporations. We want to see studies that expose the dangers—not ones that invite them to our doorstep."

PLEASE VOTE NO ON SCR 121 SD1

Very concerned,

Linda

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 4:42:12 PM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christy MacPherson	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey and members of the House Committee on Economic Development and Technology,

I have already testified in opposition of HB1308 but since we insist on keeping the possibility of legal gambling here in Hawai'i open, I would like to offer a couple of comments on SCR121 SD1.

Ensuring that the proposed working group includes ALL key stakeholders whom I believe are critical in making a sound determination about "tourist" gambling (which we all know includes low-income family gambling) is paramount.

In creating a "comprehensive" plan, the working group should indeed include governmental department representatives, economic experts who can speak to the financial costs and benefits, social workers, and gambling addiction providers in order to show responsibility and sincerity in discerning fairly, equitably and honestly. Otherwise, it's simply paying lip service.

Mahalo for your consideration.

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 4:59:29 PM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin Hahn	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose gambling in Hawaii. Gambling shall be allowed in Hawaii. I request you to vote no. Thank you

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 5:39:51 PM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Arden Fontanilla	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose SCR121 SDI

This resolution if passed would promote an activity that would be harmful to the residents of Hawaii.

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 6:28:51 PM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joy Chinen	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Legislators,

As you can see this is a very hot topic. Please don't rush into something that we will not be able to reverse. Opening this door to legalized gambling in Hawaii is not a good idea. My heart is for the families of Hawaii. Our families are our future. Opening this door will impoverish our people even more. Gambling is an addiction that will keep people in poverty. We have seen it with the gaming houses that law enforcement could not enforce. Their hands were tied. Gaming houses brought violence, drugs, and murder. Please DO NOT OPEN THIS DOOR. STRONGLY OPPOSE.

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 6:37:11 PM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doreen Morimoto	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I testified last month against HB1308 and oppose this bill SCR121also. The revenues the State thinks they will gain is nothing compared to the lives destroyed along with their families.

I have lived through my husband's struggles and pain from a gambling addiction. He had to work multiple jobs to get out of debt and his health was compromised. He passed at an early age.

Please protect our people and Do Not pass this bill. Mahalo

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 8:16:44 PM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sheila Medeiros	Individual	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

LEGALIZED GAMBLING IS SHORT TERM PLEASURE FOR LONG TERM PAIN

I strongly oppose legalizing gambling in Hawaii—it’s a reckless bet that promises quick cash but delivers long-term devastation to our communities and future generations. The evidence is clear: gambling fuels addiction across ethnic groups. A 2016 Piliwaiwaistudy found 33.2% of Honolulu’s Filipino Americans, 28% of Native Hawaiians, and 25% of Japanese Americans gamble yearly, with addiction rates rising. Pennsylvania saw a 10% surge in addiction hotline calls after legalizing casinos, per a 2022 Civil Beatreport, a trend that would grip Hawaii’s diverse population. Crime spikes in gambling hubs—Las Vegas has a 20% higher violent crime rate than non-gambling cities, per 2023 FBI data, and a 2025 Justice Department case tied Oahu’s illegal game rooms to meth trafficking. Human trafficking flourishes in gambling zones; Nevada’s legalized scene correlates with a 30% higher trafficking rate, per a 2021 Polaris study, endangering vulnerable Native Hawaiian, Filipino, and Asian communities. Families fracture—40% of gambling addicts face divorce, per a 2023 Hawaii Island Recovery report, leaving keiki neglected and unstable. These broken homes create generational trauma, with grandchildren facing poverty, addiction, and emotional scars, as studies show children of addicts are 50% more likely to develop substance abuse issues, per a 2021 National Institute on Drug Abuse report. Corruption festers in gambling systems, and Hawaii’s government, tainted by 2022 bribery scandals, can’t be trusted to oversee it. Legalizing gambling would amplify these harms, eroding our multicultural aloha spirit and burdening our grandchildren with a legacy of crime, addiction, and fractured families for a false promise of revenue. Hawaii’s strength lies in its people—Native Hawaiian, Filipino, Japanese, and beyond—not casinos. Keep gambling out to protect our mo’opuna’s future.

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 8:22:01 PM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rokeuaine Letua	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill because it will only be an open door for more corruption

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 8:44:40 PM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
stephanie Correa	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Opposition on SCR121. This will bring addiction of gambling that will be a domino effect, destroy families and finances. Neglect to children and the welfare of their wellbeing.

Testimony

Resolution on Tourism and Gambling

SCR 121 SD1

I was glad and thankful to hear that the bill to legalize sports gambling was set aside in this current legislative session. To legalize gambling is something we should avoid and reject, for its consequences would be harmful to the people of Hawai'i and the common good. It would result in increased instances of addiction and financial ruin for many families who already struggle to make ends meet. Legalized gambling can only benefit those business interests that promote it. Surely, there are more equitable and humane ways to raise the revenue we need for the work of government.

At the same time, I have deep concerns about SCR 121, which is proposing a study of legalized gaming for the benefit of tourism in our state. Let us not fool ourselves. It would not only be tourists who engage in this activity. Residents of Hawai'i would also participate and be then subject to its ill effects.

It appears to me that the makeup of the working group leans heavily in favor of legalizing gaming. There is only one person included who would be able to present the social consequences of legalized gaming. The working group should also include economists who have studied not only the supposed benefits/liabilities that legalized gambling would have for our state, but also its economic costs to families who get caught up in its web.

Let us proceed with our eyes wide open.

Thanks for your kind attention to my thoughts on this matter.

Rev. Neal MacPherson

Nu'uano

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 10:02:50 PM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rachel Robinson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!!

I stand against SCR 121. Again, I strongly oppose the proposed filth of SCR 121.

Please understand, if this resolution is passed in Hawai'i, it would promote a harmful activity to the residents of Hawai'i. Gambling is illegal for good reasons.

What children see adults do will only solidify in their minds that it's an acceptable activity, when in fact, it is not. Gambling is illegal for good reasons.

The passing of this resolution will only compound the problems suffered by those addicted to gambling.

There is a famous place on the West Coast called Sin City. A city of legalized gambling and debauchery. It didn't get its nickname from being known as a family destination.

Hawai'i IS a family destination. Out of greed will you mar the landscape of Hawai'i?? Out of greed would you subject all people of Hawai'i to the increase of drunkenness, drug use, and ultimately homelessness...that instead of families visiting the Hawaiian islands, we'd have an influx of drunks, druggies, and perverts??

When people addicted to gambling gamble away every cent they own, are any of you backing this resolution going to step in and help them out??

As it is there is not enough resources and will you open Hawai'i's doors to increased strain on our resources?

Hawai'i is not a country of origin for sex trafficking. Yet, what it is, is a transit country. How are any of you backing this bill gonna stem the king tide of filth that would overflow into Hawaiian waters???

Just take a look at some of the participants on the working group (Boyd Gaming, DraftKings, and BetMGM). What do you think their intent is towards Hawai'i?? I can tell you one thing for sure...it ain't for good...it ain't for families...and it sure as hell ain't for aloha.

I have high doubts that this resolution was proposed because any of you care a damn for any of the constituents that you “serve.”

All you backing this should be ashamed of yourselves. Does money really mean that much to you?? You are governed by mammon. Greedy for selfish gain.

What this resolution proposes will not serve anyone in any Hawai‘i community. It will only unleash hell.

I stand in strong opposition to this resolution because it will only open the doors to legalizing gambling (and whatever else floats your selfish and self-serving fancies) in our state.

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/17/2025 8:38:39 AM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Matson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG OPPOSITION.

FOCUS ON ENFORCEMENT TO PREVENT PRESENT ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES - NOT ON
MAKING ILLEGAL AVTIVITIES LEGAL !!!

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/17/2025 9:13:23 AM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mel Kahele	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Morning Chair and Members of the Committee.

I'm in strong support SCR121.

Aloha,

Mel Kahele

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/17/2025 9:14:30 AM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Faleiva C Hut	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha & Talofa,

Thank you for your time and considering my testimony. I oppose SCR121, legalizing gambling, in Hawaii. It's difficult as it is in Hawaii with the cost of living being so high. Allowing gambling will only hurt families due financial stress, violence - organize crime (we already have 2 Mexican cartels influencing our west side), suicide and the most precious gifts, our keikis. They get the brunt of the hardship and risks this brings to the community. Doing mission work in Montana (Blackfoot Nation), my husband and I witnessed the struggle these families fought daily. Absent parents, school drop outs and lack of care for the elderly. This is not Hawaii, this is not the way our ancestors taught us. Please, I beg you do not allow this to be part of our lives and most of all our future leaders, the keikis. There are other ways to help Hawaii to be better, without the cost of losing our culture.

I appreciate your time and hard work. I pray for you, your ohana and your leadership in steering us to a bright and healthy Hawaii nei.

Mahalo & Fa'afetai,

Faleiva C Hunt

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/17/2025 10:47:02 AM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sharon Martin	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TO: House Committee on Economic Development & Technology

Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair

Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair

POSITION: OPPOSE SCR 121: Requesting the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to Convene A Tourism and Gaming Working Group

Dear House Representatives,

I strongly urge you to **VOTE NO on SCR 121.**

Gambling opens the door to lawlessness. Hawaii, our Aloha state, is known worldwide as a beautiful paradise destination because of the people of Hawaii. We are deeply rooted in family values and traditions. Allowing a pathway that would greatly undermine and change the way that we live will change Hawaii. We already have chemical addictions due to illegal drugs, narcotics, vaping, etc. that have caused serious detrimental consequences to families, individually, relationally, and financially. We already have human sex trafficking and abuse destroying the lives of victims and causing irreparable damages. We already have multiple crimes of theft, fraud, and violence. Our current Emergency Management Services on Oahu doesn't have the manpower to effectively service our current population of residents.

Instead, there should be a resolution for a working group that includes law abiding, tax paying Hawaii residents and legal citizens of the United States to assess and provide practical workable solutions that will directly affect and involve our residents to strengthen and protect families.

Hawaii is not like the continental U.S. states that are struggling with the consequences of legalized gambling. NO to sports betting. No to casino gambling. No to any form of gambling. No to any studies by gambling corporations. There should be studies and testimonies that EXPOSE the dangers and irreparable damage caused to communities and families by these states struggling with this fall out.

Our vote, my family and I, is NO to SCR 121.

Respectfully,

Mrs. Sharon Martin

Windward Kaneohe resident

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/17/2025 11:00:19 AM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pamela Kaopua	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose the legalization of gambling!!!

The passage of this bill is so detrimental to the lives of our people! We must not contribute to what ails our people, but rather what heals & prospers us!

Gambling will only usher in problems! We as a people must not give in to the lures & lies of money. The illusion that these revenues will prosper us....it will NOT! The horrific stealers such as gambling addiction, exponentially adding to drug trafficking, human & child sex trafficking, drug addiction, alcohol addiction and the list continues.

Please. ENOUGH. Help us heal, not hurt!

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/17/2025 11:01:29 AM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chanara Casey Richmond	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose SCR121. Chanara Richmond HD42

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/17/2025 11:21:13 AM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Harmony Edwards-Brown	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As not only a resident of Hawai'i for over 30+ years, but also a firm believer in Christ; I can truly say that this will bring more destruction and open more doors of harm to not only our residents, but ESPECIALLY our keikis. I understand that this *may* seem like a great idea to bring attraction and revenue, but if this bill passes, you will also see more distress in our already-povertized state. There HAS to be other ideas to bring in revenue - Ideas that will not put our children at risk. At this point, we might as well kick out kids from their homes because that is what we are doing by enabling poor habits of gambling. I see it in our communities, I see it in our families and friends. **PLEASE DO NOT PASS THIS BILL. It's better to save our children now, rather than having to rescue them later!!! DO NOT PUT ATTRACTION AND REVENUE ABOVE THE SAFETY AND WELL BEING OF OUR KIDS. IF YOU ARE A PARENT, AN AUNT/UNCLE, A GRANDPARENT, OR HAVE ANY CHILDREN IN YOUR LIFE -- YOU SHOULD OPPOSE BILL SCR121!!!**

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/17/2025 11:25:21 AM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gwendolyn Savaii Kaopua	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this measure, as gambling of any kind will only lead to further distruction of our people here in Hawaii for the following reasons:

- 1) Leads to Debt/Depression
- 2) Increase crime rate.
- 3) Leads to other issues...alcholoism & drug abuse.
- 4) Uncontrollable problems because of lack of law/guidance.
- 5) More Financial Ruin to an already burdonsome problem within our state.

Please oppose this measure.....lack of further enviornmental/emotional/physical impact on our state.

Mahalo,

Gwen Kaopua

Concerned Citizen

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/17/2025 11:56:32 AM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Terri Yoshinaga	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

SCR-121-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/17/2025 12:03:06 PM

Testimony for ECD on 4/17/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chad K Taniguchi	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly oppose. Thank you.