

TO: The Honorable Jeff Barker, House Committee on Business and Labor

FROM: David Elsbernd

DATE: February 12, 2020

SUBJECT: HB 4153 – Prohibits Oregon State Lottery from offering games playable via mobile phone, personal computer or other personal electronic device, except for live sports betting and certain multistate numbers drawing games.

Dear Chair Barker and members of the committee, I am testifying in support of HB 4153.

Our family has been through eight years of grief and counseling and the loss of several hundred thousand dollars spent on lottery products, much of which I am still indebted for. While the worst is past, we must always guard against relapse, for gambling addiction is never fully conquered.

As difficult as those eight years were, I shudder to think of how much worse it could have been if high-velocity gambling had been available on smartphones, as close as a pocket or purse, and available 24 hours a day.

Perhaps as much as 50 percent of Lottery revenues come from problem gamblers. An argument will be made that the state needs the revenue from games played on mobile devices. There is really no rationale which makes acceptable the generation of revenue due to taking advantage of individuals with a neurochemical addiction to gambling, by making the gambling so freely and readily available to the susceptible.

Finally, when you take in to consideration the potential costs of mobile games – bankruptcy, divorce, imprisonment, even suicide to those desperate to escape their addiction, it's not a good deal. As well there are the potential costs of embezzlement or other crimes to support the addiction, and the costs of social services, law enforcement and courts in dealing with the fallout, the cost / benefit ratio is hardly attractive.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I sincerely hope you support this measure,

David Elsbernd