The Committee on Responsible Gaming

Sponsor: Senator Jon Ford

Topic: NCLGS Responsible Gaming and Problem Gambling Resolution

Whereas the National Council of Legislators from Gaming States (NCLGS) is an independent organization of elected officials dedicated to non-partisan gaming awareness and education of lawmakers and regulators; and

Whereas NCLGS believes the issue of responsible gaming and problem gambling policy deserves attention in every state; and

Whereas the United States system of granting states the power to determine what forms of legal gambling are made available under what circumstances has led to significant variations across the country in responsible gaming and problem gambling policy; and

Whereas responsible gaming and problem gambling-related regulations vary across different types of gambling products and delivery methods, including but not limited to retail and online casinos, retail and online lottery products, retail and online sports wagering (including esports and fantasy sports), charitable gaming, pari-mutuel facilities; and

Whereas problem gambling is a mental health issue that is often undetected, with only a small proportion of those directly affected either seeking or receiving treatment or other forms of support services; and

Whereas the goal of comprehensive responsible gaming policy to increase protective factors through safer gaming regulatory policies, operator practices and products, and informed-decision making practices by consumers is an evidence-based effort that requires coordination and collaboration; and

Whereas the goal of problem gambling policy to reduce prevalence and incidence rates and the personal, familial, and societal costs associated with problem gambling is a vast undertaking that requires a multitude of policy strategies and interventions tailored to different aspects of the strategy to address the problem; and

Whereas addressing responsible gaming and problem gambling can have significant benefits for the health of individuals, families, and communities, as well as state budgets because of its high level of interconnectedness to other health and social issues; and

Whereas there is little standardization on the amount of funding required to address a holistic approach, and how those funds are to be derived or spent in each jurisdiction for responsible gaming and problem gambling services or programs; now, therefore, be it…

Resolved, that The National Council of Legislators from Gaming States (NCLGS):

1. Urges states to holistically address responsible gaming and problem gambling through a combination of prevention and harm reduction, public awareness, intervention and treatment, research, and adequate funding that address the specific measured needs of that state or jurisdiction and ensure all services are affordable, effective, and accessible for citizens who need them;

2. Encourages cross-jurisdictional and multi-state collaboration among policymakers, regulators, gaming operators, gaming manufacturers, community leaders, researchers, treatment providers and others to develop evidence-based responsible gaming and problem gambling research, policies, and services;

3. Recommends the establishment of responsible gaming and problem gambling regulations for all forms of legalized gaming, tailored as necessary to each form but consistent with jurisdictional policy goals;

4. Encourages the promotion of safer gaming behaviors through the development and funding of public awareness campaigns coupled with prevention and harm reduction efforts within communities that educate consumers how to game in safety and raise awareness of potential signs of a gambling problem, including those that coexist with other public health concerns;

5. Urges the use of education and harm minimization measures and policies involving limit setting and exclusion for marketing, payments and payment processing (personal credit, credit card, cashless payments, check cashing, bank withdrawals, and ATM patterns/usage), as well as other precommitment tools and personal data information for players to make informed decisions about their gaming;

6. Encourages policies and programs that enable customers to discontinue their play temporarily or permanently through exclusion programs from gaming activities statewide and across multiple jurisdictions with multiple term lengths;

7. Suggests that states and operators coordinate gambling exclusion lists to prevent people with gambling problems and others on exclusion lists from problematic play in other states;

8. Urges formalized processes for family members to express problem gambling-related concerns to the state regulatory body and/or gaming operators;

9. Calls for responsible gaming and problem gambling policies and insurance coverage for all employees of gaming licensees;

10. Supports the use of one accredited national problem gambling helpline number within all jurisdictions;

11. Calls for the development of state or jurisdictional advertising guidelines to ensure marketing is only targeted to those who are of legal age to gamble, follow standards to not offer content, themes, and promotions that have special appeal to those consumers most at risk for gambling problems, and to ensure there are programs that audit and monitor the content of third-party marketing affiliates;

12. Recommends the creation of a specific staff/department function within a gaming regulatory body to oversee all aspects of responsible gaming and problem gambling regulations and to monitor compliance and program accountability and efficacy;

13. Recommends integrating problem gambling services and screening into other substance use disorder, mental health and/or behavioral health services to identify, reduce, and prevent problem gambling;

14. Endorses the establishment and funding to integrate problem gambling into other diversion or therapeutic courts to offer responses to defendants in the criminal justice system with gambling problems through a court-supervised, comprehensive recovery program;

15. Emphasizes the need to include access to anonymized player data, research components, and funding for responsible gaming and problem gambling policies to gauge trends, program efficacy, adapt to current conditions, and expand evidence-based best practices and new prevention and treatment techniques; and

16. Stresses the need for dedicated funding earmarked for the delivery of the full range of responsible gaming and problem gambling services, including but not limited to prevention, awareness and education, harm reduction, workforce development, outreach, treatment, and research.