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HB5095

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CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE

PROCEEDINGS
2012

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PART 6
1746 – 2095

On Page 34, Calendar 65, substitute for House Bill Number 5095, AN ACT CONCERNING OFFTRACK BETTING BRANCH FACILITIES, favorable report by the committee on Finance.

SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Stevie Dargan of the 115th, you have the floor, sir.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I move acceptance of joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

SPEAKER ORANGE:

The question is acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

Will you remark? Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Thank you very much, Mr. -- Madam Speaker.

Just a -- a quick overview of the bill. Sportek, which runs our offtrack betting facilities, which has licensing for 18 specific locations in the State of Connecticut, recently has put about three million dollars into the 15 existing offtrack betting facilities that they have within the State of Connecticut.

And there's a process that they have that's in place. Anytime that they need to get permission from the Department of Consumer protection, which Special Revenue is underneath right now, in order to operate an existing facility or expansion of one of the three licenses within our state.

This will just simply streamline the process. 1.9 percent of the handle of the existing offtrack betting facilities go back to those towns that have an offtrack betting facility. And it does not expand gaming within our state. It just streamlines the process of our offtrack betting facilities.

And also, gives control -- local control, which we're all concerned about, whether or not a facility would be located within a specific community. And that would have to approved by whatever type of government that the specific community has.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, sir.

Will you care to remark further? Will you care to remark further?

Representative Jan Giegler, the ranking member of the Public Safety committee, you have the floor, madam.

REP. GIEGLER (138th):

Thank you, Madam Chair.

I just have a question to the Chairman of the Public Safety committee.

SPEAKER ORANGE:

Please proceed.

REP. GIEGLER (138th):

Thank you, Madam Chair.

On line 25, it refers to "and three additional locations." Are these additional locations part of the 18 that are listed in line 6?

SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Through you to the ranking member of the committee.

There are 15 existing facilities. There are three more licenses that can be approved that are not currently

at this time. But if Sportek, which is the vendor for our off track betting facility, they would have to get approval not only from the Department of Consumer Protection, but from that local community that they wanted to put that facility in.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Giegler.

REP. GIEGLER (138th):

Thank you, Madam Chair.

So in -- we're adding three additional locations. Does that mean that we do not know what cities or towns these -- these facilities will be located in?

SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Just to be perfectly clear on, underneath existing law, Sportek has the right to operate 18 facilities. Currently they have 15 licenses. I can't tell you where those other three facilities would be, if in fact, they would even expand -- that opportunity to expand to the 18

licenses, that they have the right underneath the current law.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Giegler.

REP. GIEGLER (138th):

Thank you, Madam Chair.

And I appreciate the answers from the chairman of the Public Safety committee.

I think this is a -- is a good bill and I know the committee has worked on this bill for awhile. I think it does streamline the process and I urge my colleagues' support.

Thank you.

SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, madam.

Will you care to remark further on the bill? Will you care to remark further on the bill?

If not, staff and guests, please come to the well of the House. Members, take your seats. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll call. Members to the Chamber. The House taking a roll call vote. Members to the Chamber, please.

SPEAKER ORANGE:

Have all members voted?

Have all members voted? Have all members voted?

Please check the machine to determine if your vote has been properly cast.

If so, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally.

And will the Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

House Bill 5095.

Total Number Voting	143
Necessary for Passage	72
Those voting Yea	130
Those voting Nay	13
Those absent and not voting	8.

SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

The bill passes.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar Number 146.

THE CLERK:

On Page 7, Calendar 146, House Bill Number 5246, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PERMIT TO SELL PISTOLS OR REVOLVERS, favorable report by the committee on Public Safety.

SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

SPEAKER ORANGE:

The question before the Chamber is acceptance of the Joint favorable committee's report and passage of the bill.

Will you remark?

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

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little bit of relief to municipalities without trampling the rights of our citizens at all either. So I think it's a good way to approach it.

SUSAN BRANSFIELD: Thank you.

REP. DARGAN: Further questions? Thank you very much for coming and testifying.

SUSAN BRANSFIELD: Thank you. Have a good afternoon.

REP. DARGAN: Next presenter is Brooks Pierce, representing Sportech. It's good that Brooks is coming to testify on something besides police, fire, and onto gaming issues.

BROOKS PIERCE: Thank you very much. Senator Hartley, Representative Dargan, and distinguished members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of Raised Bill 5095, AN ACT CONCERNING OFF-TRACK BETTING FACILITIES.

The proposed legislation provides local communities the opportunity to decide whether to include simulcasting or rather the display of video when considering an opportunity to host a new off-tracking betting facility. Currently a local community can vote in favor of hearing -- of having a branch in their town, but then needs state legislative permission to show the live race. Patrons would be able to hear the race and wager on the race, but not watch the race approved by the state Legislature.

As you may recall, we've come before the committee over the last few years to ask for

Legislation to allow simulcasting at our facilities in Milford, Putnam, New London, Manchester, and Willimantic. A new business model incorporates racing into existing or newly created sports bars. This has been a benefit to these businesses allowing them to generate additional food and beverage revenue in a very difficult economic climate.

It also assists the towns in which these facilities are located by generating revenue and jobs for the community. In fact, in the last 12 months, our five new facilities alone have created positions for over 30 employees and generated $600,000 in taxes for the state of Connecticut and those local towns.

We are asking to streamline the process. We currently operate 15 sites throughout the state and have the right to open 3 additional branches. The current process requires us to get local approval to open a branch, get approval from the Department of Consumer Protection, DCP, and then return to the Legislature for one thing, to allow the races to be shown on television.

If we get that approval -- approval, we then have to return to the local community and the DCP to get their final approval to include simulcasting at the facility. This last step is largely a formality, but it adds time to the process. The second step, coming back to the Legislature to get permission to televise adds typically a year to the process.

In no case where we have gotten local and DCP approval in the past has the General Assembly denied us the opportunity to televise the races. It's not efficient for the community, Sportech, or the state Legislature to have to

come back periodically to introduce legislation for the right to televise races. Simulcasting or -- or the display of video enhances the experience of the racing fan by allowing them to watch and listen to the race. Without simulcasting, racing fans can only view the odds and hear the race call.

Members of the public can view live horse racing over cable TV, over the internet, and even on their mobile phones or iPads. Indeed if you log onto ESPN.com or the website of almost any racetrack in the country, you can view streaming video of live horse races.

It's been our experience that states with legalized pari-mutuel wagering do not typically require additional legislation to televise races at a wagering facility. More commonly, they're concomitant approval of televising a race once the state's racing commission has approved wâgering.

Sportech purchased the off-track betting operations from Autotote in October of 2010 and is committed to growing the company, creating jobs, and increasing tax revenue to the state and local host communities. Sportech has been a good corporate citizen in Connecticut and the towns where we do business. We have relocated our North American headquarters to New Haven and have invested approximately $3 million in improvements in our facilities in the last 12 months.

Our business is showing positive trends after several years of decline, and we believe that removing this unnecessary and burdensome regulation would be helpful. And it echoes the Governor's call to make Connecticut a more business friendly state. I ask for your full

support of Raised Bill No. 5095. And again thank you for the opportunity to provide my testimony.

REP. DARGAN: Thank you, Brooks. Any questions from members of the committee? I know just looking over your testimony, what wasn't included -- do you have the breakdown of individual OTB facility that's in each one of those communities, is it 1.9 percent that goes to that host community?

BROOKS PIERCE: Yeah, it's actually 1.9 that goes to the state and 1.6 that goes to the local community.

REP. DARGAN: Okay. And that's on total wagers that comes into that facility?

BROOKS PIERCE: That's correct.

REP. DARGAN: Okay. Thank you. Further questions? Thank you very much, Brooks, for your testimony.

BROOKS PIERCE: Thank you.

REP. DARGAN: Next presenter is Representative Mike Molgano.

REP. MOLGANO: Hopefully my voice projects loud enough. Good afternoon, Honorable Co-Chairs Senator Hartley and Representative Dargan, Honorable Vice-Chairs Senator Daily and Representative Jutila, Ranking Members Senator Guglielmo and Representative Giegler, and members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. My name is Mike Molgano, I'm the State Representative for District 144. I thank you for providing me the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 5295, AN ACT CONCERNING

Sportech INC

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New Haven, CT 06511
T + 1 (203) 361 3421

February 28, 2012

Statement of Brooks H. Pierce of Sportech Venues, Inc. in Favor of H.B. No. 5095 (Raised) – An Act Concerning Off-Track Betting Branch Betting Facilities.

Senator Hartley, Representative Dargan and distinguished members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of Raised Bill No. 5095, An Act Concerning Off-Track Betting Facilities.

The proposed legislation provides local communities the opportunity to decide whether to include simulcasting (or rather, display of video) when considering an opportunity to host a new off-track betting facility.

Currently, a local community can vote in favor of having a branch in their town, but then needs state legislative permission to show the live race. Patrons would be able to hear the race and wager on it, but not watch the race approved by the state legislature

As you may recall, we have come before the Committee over the last few years to ask for legislation to allow simulcasting at our facilities in Milford, Putnam, New London, Manchester and Willimantic. Our new business model incorporates racing into existing or newly created sports bars. This has been a benefit to these businesses allowing them to generate additional food and beverage revenue in a very difficult economic climate. It also assists the towns in which these facilities are located by generating revenue and jobs for the community In the last twelve months, our five new facilities alone created positions for over thirty employees and generated six-hundred thousand dollars in taxes for the State of Connecticut and those local towns.

We are asking to streamline the process We currently operate 15 sites throughout the state and have the right to open three additional branches. The current process requires us to get local approval to open a branch, get approval from the Department of Consumer Protection ("DCP") and then return to the legislature for one thing – to allow the races to be shown on television If we get that approval, we then have to return to the local community and the DCP to get their final approval to include simulcasting at the facility This last step is largely a formality but it adds time to the process. The second step – coming back to the legislature to get permission to televise adds typically at least a year.

In no case where we have gotten local and DCP approval in the past has the General Assembly denied us the opportunity to televise the races.

It is not efficient for the community, Sportech or the state legislature to have to come back periodically to introduce legislation for the right to televise the races

Simulcasting or the display of video enhances the experience of the racing fan by allowing them to watch and listen to the race. Without simulcasting, racing fans can only view the odds and hear the race call Members of the public can view live horse racing over cable TV, over the Internet, and even on their mobile phones or iPad's. Indeed, if you log on to ESPN.com or the website of almost any racetrack in the country, you can view streaming video of live horse races. It has been our experience that states with legalized pari-mutuel wagering do not typically require additional legislation to televise races at a wagering facility. More commonly, there is concomitant approval of televising a race once the state's racing commission has approved wagering.

Sportech purchased the off-track betting operation from Autotote in October of 2010, and is committed to growing the company, creating jobs and increasing the tax revenue it pays the State and the local host communities. Sportech has been a good corporate citizen in Connecticut and the towns where it does business We have relocated our North American headquarters to New Haven, and have invested approximately $3 million in improvements in our facilities in the last 12 months. Our business is showing positive trends after several years of decline. We believe that removing this unnecessary and burdensome regulation would be helpful, and it echoes the Governor's call to make Connecticut a more business friendly state.

I ask for your full support of Raised Bill No. 5095, and again thank you for the opportunity to provide my testimony.

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if you could all rise and give them the great Senate welcome that you all do.

And on this very busy evening, Mr. President, I really appreciate you allowing me to do that.

Thank you, sir.

THE CHAIR:

No problem. Thank you. And we welcome you to the Chamber. And it is a Senate tradition to have the Kissel family here with us on the last few days. So we welcome you here, and the kids are getting bigger everyday. Thank you.

Thank you, Senator.

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On page 7, Calendar 384, Substitute for House Bill Number 5095, AN ACT CONCERNING OFF-TRACK BETTING BRANCH FACILITIES, favorable report of the Committee on Public Safety and Finance, Revenue and Bonding.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Thank you. Good evening, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Good evening.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

I move acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report, sir, and passage of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

On acceptance and passage, will you remark?

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Yes, thank you. I will, indeed, sir.

This bill is a very simple bill in that previous legislation had allowed for 18 OTB --

THE CHAIR:

Senator, can you hold on please?

Could we please bring the Chamber to order? Please bring the Chamber to order. Thank you.

Senator Hartley, please proceed.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

As I was saying, previous legislation had authorized 18 off-track betting facilities in this state. There are -- 15 of those have actually been sited and gone through the local approval process. The legislation that we have before us this evening would simply not expand any of that, but allow the remaining three, which have not been sited anywhere, the opportunity to offer simulcast or video.

It, basically, is an endeavor to allow them to operate in the 21st century, in view of the fact that anybody could view a race on an iPad, even an iPhone. And with that, sir, I would ask for support.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise for the purposes of questions to the proponent of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I -- I apologize to Senator Hartley in advance because I do not know the entire history of off-track betting. But I think it's my understanding that, not too long ago, we increased the amount of off-track betting locations to the current number of 18.

Through you, Mr. President, if Senator Hartley could just explain to me how that happened and when was that.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Thank you, Mr. President, and through you.

Well, the division of special revenue, to give you a very brief history, Senator Welch, operated our off-track betting from 1976. And in 1993, it was sold to an enterprise called "Autotote." Then, in 2010, it was sold to another enterprise called "Sportech." So at that time, the -- we went from the existing ten to -- to 12 and we added two locations. And then, in 2010, we went from 12 locations to 15. And those locations were Manchester, Willimantic and New London.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And, I guess,, one thing that perplexes me -- and maybe

there's some history that -- that Senator Hartley hasn't revealed -- but if -- if we are currently allowed to have 18 off-track branches, then why is it that we need this bill?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Thank you, Mr. President, and through you.

Because the legislation was specific to allowing the siting. And then, once a town would be interested in having such a facility, it would have to go through their entire legislative process, permitting, legislative body, and so forth.

If, in fact, that happened, and we were under the number that was authorized in state statute, then there could be one that was sited. However, in each instance, they would have to return to the legislature to seek the ability to have the simulcasting.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Mr. President.

So are -- are these -- are we talking about specific locations that are currently sited and are just seeking for simulcast? Is that what we're doing here?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Thank you.

Through you, Mr. President.

We are talking about -- the 15 that exist right now have the ability to do the video or the simulcast. There are three that are not sited. And should they be cited, if they go through -- successfully that is, the legislative local process, then they would not have to come back to this body to get permission to offer the video because it's almost an oxymoron in view of the fact that anyone could view such an event right now on a laptop.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Mr. President.

So I -- I appreciate that. And I think it's -- it's clearer to me now. And I just want to, I guess, state it in my own words. You can tell me if I'm correct, Senator Hartley. And that is, we've allowed the ability to have 18 off-track betting locations, but we've only allowed the ability for simulcasting of 15 off-track betting locations. And so, in essence, this will allow the full 18 to have simulcast, wherever -- wherever those last three are located. Is that correct?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Through you, sir.

Yes, it is, should they successfully have local legislative approval.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And -- and I guess -- Senator Hartley might not know the answer to this question -- but, I guess, what would be -- or what would have been the wisdom in the legislation we're seeking to change here, where we would allow 18 but we would only allow the simulcasting of 15?

I guess maybe another way of stating the question is, what would you do with and off-track betting branch if it couldn't simulcast?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Thank you, and through you, Mr. President.

Well, it would be an event that you would be able to hear the audio on and the -- and quite frankly, Senator Welch, I don't speak from experience. So I'm relaying to you as I know it, as it's been described. And they would then get the betting odds, but no actual picture of the event.

And, of course, now, 2012, we could view an event right here as we are in the Chamber. So it's almost a function of technology outpacing legislation, as I said, because it was on the books going back to the nineties.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And I guess I -- I -- I'm beginning to pick up another important distinction, and I just want to make sure I understand that as well. That notwithstanding the ability to simulcast, you can still place bets at each one of these locations, whether they're simulcasting or not. And is that a correct understanding?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Yes, thank you, Mr. President, and through you, sir.

Yes, you would be able to do that. However, like every industry, there is competition. And I guess who would want to go to a venue where you could not have the benefit of video now.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And, I guess, that raises one of my concerns and that is the proliferation of gambling in the state of Connecticut. I know in the past when we've done things, such as expand the authority of lottery or enter compacts with casinos, we also require money to be set aside for the rehabilitation of those that find themselves addicted to gambling.

And if I may, through you, Mr. President, is there anything in this bill that sets aside or increases the amount of funds that -- for helping people with a gambling addiction?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Thank you, Mr. President, and through you, sir.

No, there is not. But I should like to just mention again it is not an expansion of gaming. It is simply allowing simulcast to be in those that have been authorized.

Through you, sir.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And I think I understand what Senator Hartley just said, but I want to make sure I'm clear. And that is, if there are 18 locations already allowed, whether or not you can watch the race has nothing to do with whether or not you can bet on the race.

And so, if these three sites were to go forward without simulcast, you would still be able to place bets there. And that's why Senator Hartley is saying it's not an expansion of gaming. Did I get that right?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Through you, thank you, Mr. President.

And through you, to Senator Welch.

Yes, because we are not adding any gaming facilities by virtue of this legislation.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And, I guess, one distinction that I could conceive of drawing with respect to that answer is this, and that is, if nobody would spend the money to create a new OTB location, if they can't simulcast -- because I think, Senator Hartley, you appropriately noted it's not going to be as exciting. There's some limitations. You'll just be listening to the race, not watching it.

That -- then this bill might, in essence, be a de facto expansion of gaming through just the very principle that the demand will not be there but for the simulcast.

And so, if I may, through you, Mr. President, I noticed the institution, or the company that has the licensing for this, and that -- they're obviously behind this bill, in that it would help them and they would want it, but have they, in any way, indicated that they would not go forward and expand to the 18 franchises that they could have were they not able to simulcast? And if that question isn't clear, I'd be more than happy to try it again.

But, through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

No. Through you, sir, the question is clear. There was not a discussion about further expansion. I should say that it is a new company and they have now moved their world headquarters to New Haven. And they are engaged in the state as good corporate citizens.

Thank you, sir.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And, again, I appreciate Senator Hartley might not know the answer to this question. But do -- do we have any statistics on the impact to, say, gaming addictions through an increase in off-track betting, whether it be Connecticut or any other state, for that matter.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Through you, sir.

I do not.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I -- I'm not sure how I feel about this bill. I think on -- and I thank Senator Hartley for the answer to my questions.

I guess I get it intellectually that, you know, we're not expanding the franchise of gambling, as it were, here in the state of Connecticut by doing this. Although, I just have this instinct that this -- the construction -- the -- the -- of the new three sites probably wouldn't go forward were it not for the ability to simulcast.

And so I think that, in essence, what we might be doing here is just that. And I think you could make arguments for or against increasing the franchise, as it were. But I think, whether you make the arguments for or against, when you make the arguments for that it would be prudent to set aside funds like we do in other cases to help those that might be facing -- or the risk of addiction to gambling.

You know, we just had a big race here in the United States. I think many of us, if not -- were able to watch it, were at least interested in who the winner was. It's an exciting time. And I think a lot of people are probably able to enjoy a race like that without falling into the perils that ruin lives through -- through gambling.

But I think that's kind of unique. And -- and you know, these institutions tend to not just cast the one race that you can watch on a major network news if it's part of the Triple Crown. So I'm assuming there's going to be more people who want to speak on this issue, Mr. President. I will eagerly listen. But at this point, I'm inclined to not be supporting it.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I have a couple of questions, if I may, to Senator Hartley.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, madam.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you.

Senator Hartley, the bill before us, as -- as you have stated previously, does not specify the location of the three additional facilities. And I know that we voted on

this several times over many years as we've been filling in, so to speak, the 18 authorizations or allocations for off-track betting facilities.

Is this the first time that we actually have had the bill such as this come before us, where the new facilities are not named or the towns that they're in?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Thank you, Mr. President, and through you, to Senator Stillman.

Senator Stillman, as you know, I'm new to the Public Safety Committee. And my understanding is that the question of trying to extend simulcast perhaps was before on a committee level. I'm not sure if it ever came onto the floor.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you, sir.

Through you, to Senator Hartley.

I believe that they -- they have been in the past. And that's -- that's my biggest concern, is the fact that we don't know where they're going.

Do -- do you have any idea, Senator Hartley, whether the three new facilities could be within existing communities that have them? In other words, let's say, like, New London -- which was one of the last ones that we authorized a couple of years ago -- I believe they have just the one.

Now, is it possible that someone could come in and ask for another one in the same community, or are they supposed

to be one per community?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. And through you, to Senator Stillman.

To my knowledge, there is nothing that specifically says there shall be distance apart or communities apart. However, once again, it must go through the local legislative process, which is a very rigorous process. And I would think that, perhaps, if the occasion ever arose, that there was an endeavor to put, perhaps, multiple locations in a community, that community would weigh in very significantly, however that community felt it was appropriate or not.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I appreciate that answer. I am -- I'm rather disturbed with the idea that we don't know where they could go because they're not named in the bill.

But I also wanted to ask you, through you, Mr. President, once the community, if a community approves it goes through all the appropriate permitting and zoning, et cetera, et cetera, and approval by whatever local legislative body they have, does it then have to come back again to us here, in the Legislature, once those sites are established or named?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. And through you, to Senator Stillman.

The return for legislative action was to have the simulcast piece. And initially, when the original legislation was in place, simulcasting was a pretty unique technology. That is no longer the case. And so this is almost a discussion about technology moving on.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you, Mr. President. And I thank Senator Hartley for her answers.

I don't think it's a surprise to anyone that I probably will not -- I know I will not be supporting this bill.

As a previous chair of the Public Safety Committee, I had an opportunity to debate and bring a couple of bills to the floor to expand the OTB sites in the state, and some of them to turn them into simulcasting facilities.

I am -- I am concerned because I don't -- because we don't know where they're going. We've always known that. Previously, they've gone through their local legislative process and have been approved before they have been brought here for final approval. And for those that may not have completed the process, sometimes they, at least, told us where they were going.

And so, because I feel somewhat in the dark in this -- on this bill, and not understanding the ramifications of those three new additional facilities, I will not be supporting this bill this evening.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, just so I make sure I got this right, to Senator Hartley, it's my understanding that the next three, if I understood the conversations correctly, could go anyplace in the State of Connecticut. Is that correct?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Yes, Mr. President.

And, through you, to Senator Fasano.
Theoretically, that is true, but once again, subject to the local process, which is the determiner of what is located and what is deemed appropriate for particular communities, sir.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO:

Thank you, Mr. President. I thank Senator Hartley for the answer.

You know, this dates back, if I may, to a time when this issue first became to increase the number of OTBs with respect to the broadcasting of television on the OTBs. And this Legislature was faced with a very difficult issue at the time of how many. And as I recall, the conversation

was long and lengthy in the hallways.

As we debated the issue, we were made, as a Legislature, certain promises as to the restriction and locations. That there was some that we needed based upon various reasons, and that would be the ask and there would be no more ask. And then a couple years back, there's been more, and now, yet again, more.

And although I know there had -- there is somewhat of local control, I suppose, the issue is it can go anyplace. And the issue is I thought we wanted to control where we had the betting and where we did not, in terms of policy decision from a State perspective, not necessarily from a local perspective.

So this huge increase in philosophy that whatever deal we made is no longer the deal and we're continue to work outside that deal, as a legislator, it bothers me because I voted for this proposal some time ago when I thought we had an understanding of the maximum size. That no longer is the answer.

And I, kind of, agree with what Senator Stillman has indicated, and I don't feel all that comfortable. I don't feel comfortable knowing exactly where these are going when we all know the dangers of gambling -- has and can bring to a community or to a state, but necessarily to a community. So I would join Senator Stillman in my objection to this bill.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, first a couple of comments and then I might have some questions for the proponent. And I appreciate Senator Hartley's review of the history of these OTB centers.

I was here when Autotote was the owner of the off-track betting facilities and there was a similar bill to expand the number of simulcast places in the State of Connecticut -- actually it was to switch one.

And at the time, Autotech (sic), not the owner now, and their representatives up here came to me and others who are opposed to that on the very last night of session, similar to where we are. And then -- they said, we will agree not to have simulcast at all 18 facilities if you'll allow this to happen. So I said, okay. Well, Autotote sold to Sportech, by all accounts, a very good company, different representation, and I don't hold them to that deal.

But they came back and got a new facility opened in New London. The difference between those two instances is that we knew where those facilities were going to go; here we don't. Are they going to open one in my hometown of Fairfield? Because I'm not going to vote for a bill that would allow them to do that.

Are they going to open one in your district, Senator Guglielmo, in Stafford Springs? I don't know. This allows them to open three new gambling facilities around the State of Connecticut. So why are we doing this? Since when did we become so desperate for revenue that we have to expand gambling in the State of Connecticut?

And if we go to 18 facilities, then at what point are the current owners or maybe owners in the future going to say, how about 20? Because we started going from 10 to 12 and then 12 to 15 and now we are going to 18. So the very idea that there's not going to be an expansion behind 18 is simply ridiculous. And nobody has made a representation that they're not going to go beyond 18.

And even when the previous owner made the representation to me that they wouldn't go beyond 15, I think the number was, they, in fact, have.

With that, Mr. President, if I could, I'd like to ask a few questions to the proponent of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Senator Hartley, do I read this correctly as indicating that the three additional facilities could be located anywhere in the State of Connecticut?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Through you, Mr. President, to Senator McKinney.

There is no identification of any specific additional locations. Once again, the legislature previously authorized 18. And so it is the process for them to come back seeking the ability to have simulcast. And that is what the bill is, not to establish additional locations.

Because they have authority right now and statute for 18. It is to say, in -- in the remaining three that are not sited, that they will have the ability to offer simulcast just in view of technology being what it is now.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

Thank you.

So that -- that's a different reading than I have, which is a reading that I would feel is more favorable.

Through you, Mr. President.

Senator Hartley, are you saying that there are existing OTB facilities that are not simulcast that will be?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And to Senator McKinney, no. I am not saying there are existing facilities that do not offer the video. I'm saying that there is authorization for 18 and there are 15 of which have simulcast. Three do not.

These are three, to your point, that are not specified as to a location which are seeking to have the ability to offer the video simulcast.

Thank you, sir.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

Thank you.

And I think the only conclusion that can be drawn is that, with permission, as you indicated, in the statutes have 18 OTB facilities. The reason they don't have three facilities without simulcast is simple economics. It's probably not financially feasible is why they wanted to switch the simulcast to Torrington. It's why they wanted to switch the simulcast to New London.

My assumption is, without simulcast, you can't make money. That's why they won't open up three facilities. Is that correct?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Mr. President, through you, to Senator McKinney.

I -- I suppose that could be an assumption. However, another assumption is that since someone could actually get the video of a particular event and they could, theoretically, staff such a facility with laptops, they would effectively have a simulcast, but it wouldn't be on the big screen, I guess.

So there is a very important part of this where, technology being what it is, that they are very dated if, in fact, there was a facility that had no video.

Thank you, sir.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

So, Senator Hartley, are you then saying that you can open up one of the three remaining authorized off-track betting branch facilities without screens but have laptops that would effectively allow people to see the races they are betting on?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Through you, Mr. President.

Theoretically, there -- they would be able to, assuming that they went through, successfully, all of the local legislative approvals in a particular community. And if there was the instance where they could have a laptop in front of them at a station, that they would have the video of an event.

So this, once again, is an effort to offer the simulcast, which the original legislation required coming back to the legislature for.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And is there a reason, Senator Hartley, in the law that currently exists, we name the municipalities where the simulcast facilities are. And the bill speaks to New Haven, Windsor Locks, East Haven, Norwalk, Hartford, New Britain, Bristol, Torrington, Waterbury, Milford, New London, Manchester, Windham and Putnam and Bridgeport. I believe those are the 15.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

Is there a reason -- is there a reason why we don't name the three new locations?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Mr. President, through you, and to Senator McKinney.

You are correct, Senator McKinney, that we have identified each of the existing 15 in legislation. And I can only say to you that this is a new company. There has been no discussion, that I am aware of, of any site. Not one, not two or not three, but just that technology is -- at least their ability to offer technology is not in sync with their underlining authorization for 18 facilities.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

Well then, why wouldn't we -- why wouldn't we entertain a bill that would, for example, do what happened in the London -- I think it was last session, it might have been the session before that -- where we passed legislation allowing simulcast in New London.

They had all their local approvals. We knew where it was going to go. Why wouldn't we say that, if there's a down in the state of Connecticut that wants one of these three simulcast, if the gaming policy board approves it, if the local municipality approves it through its process -- two requisites, I understand, under law -- why wouldn't we allow that happen and then come up here and vote on whether or not it's appropriate to go in town X, rather than us vote on something that could happen in any of our towns, including towns that may not want it?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. And through you, to Senator McKinney.

Once again, this would not get thrust upon a community unless that particular community embraced it, embraced it by virtue of all of their approvals, by virtue of an affirmative position on an application. And therefore, it is not going to be they will of the particular vendor in terms of where they go. They may entertain and seek to go in, but there is a very extensive process, including public hearings and the like, were it would be totally vetted. And the community would clearly have the ability to support or not to support this kind of thing. That is not what we're talking about here. We're just talking about what that would entail. And once again, in this

instance, the one item is that ability to have video.

Thank you, sir.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

Thank you. And through you, Mr. President, and I do thank the gentlelady for her answers. But through you -- and I had been introduced to some officials at Auto -- Sportech -- excuse me. They seem to be very good people who are bringing jobs to Connecticut, and I don't have a problem with that, although I don't like the expansion of gambling in our state.

If you've talked to them, is it your understanding that they have under active consideration a location or up to three locations that they would like to pursue in the near future?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Through you, to Senator McKinney.

In my conversations with the new vendor, the new owner there was no indication. Really, what -- in their brief ownership, they have invested heavily in the State. They have moved their corporate headquarters to the city of New Haven. They have upgraded their facilities, but it has not been about adding new facilities.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

And I guess that's why I wish what we were doing here were voting on approval of a facility in a certain municipality because then we would be assured that the municipality wanted it.

And what -- what we're doing now, if this passes, actually adds value to Autotote. Instead of having 15 simulcast facilities, now they have 18 possible simulcasts, and that's a financial benefit to them, without knowing if there's a commitment to doing more.

So that's why I'm not sure that's the right way, although that's not the biggest sticking point for me on this bill.

Senator Hartley, through you, Mr. President. I think the bill is pretty clear, but if I could just have you walk me through, what I see, as an approval process, for one of these three or for each of the three, should there be three, is that they first have to be approved by the commissioner with the consent of the gaming policy board and that's the commissioner of consumer protection.

So through you, Mr. President, to Senator Hartley, first, is that the process? And, second, can you describe briefly what that process through to getting a commissioner's approval is? Is there a public hearing requirement in the municipality where it might go? What -- what is entailed in getting approval of the commissioner of consumer protection with, I think, as the language says, with the consent of the gaming policy board?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And, through you, to Senator McKinney.

While it is not delineated specifically, it is my understanding that the consumer protection and the gaming policy board do a complete vetting of the, obviously, the

vendor. Then there is a determination that this proposal goes to the local legislative body of the municipality, by which there is a public process, a public hearing, perhaps, maybe, even more than one public hearing.

And, ultimately, in going through that, there probably would be all of the other boards that would be involved if they are talking about a site that is perhaps being developed as a first time or built. And as we know, these processes take extended periods of time. And each one of them, if we are asking for variances or zoning issues, have also the public element, in terms of public input and -- and votes.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

Thank you. I appreciate the answer.

Having not been to one of the facilities in the Connecticut, through you, Mr. President, is there -- is there anything -- is there any other kind of gaming activities that goes on, or is it simply simulcast betting on horseraces?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Through you, Mr. President, to Senator McKinney.

It can be several kinds of events. It can be horseracing. It can be dog racing, as I understand it, or jai alai.

I also understand that, in some of the venues, or at least one, it is in another room which is part of an establishment which is a restaurant. So it has the dimension of, I guess, if folks choose to go and have dinner, at some point,

during their -- their evening.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

Thank you, Senator Hartley. And thank you, Mr. President

Senator Hartley, the last line of the bill talks about annual reports to the joint standing committee having cognizance of legalized gambling. That committee being the one that you cochair, the Public Safety Committee.

Have you reviewed -- well, I guess I shouldn't even make that assumption. Does the department comply with the requirement to make the annual reports? And if they do, in your review of them, can you share with me, do those reports talk about employment? Do they talk about economic impact? Do they talk about revenue to the state in the form of taxes? What type of information is given through that report?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Through you, to Senator McKinney.

Yes, of course, there is -- there is an annual report. It is one of many that, I think, line our shelves. While I cannot recall for you chapter and verse, I can tell you that I did retrieve the summary of investigative actions on all consumer protection gaming.

And pleased to say that, with regard to off-track betting, there was only one investigation, whereas, in other instances, there were multiple numbers. So it is something that is reviewed. Oversight is provided and necessary, I guess, investigative procedures go on. And

as I said, in this report, which I have, and it is the most recent report, it shows one.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

Thank you.

And Senator Hartley, through you, Mr. President, probably asking you a question that can't be answered and is, at best, a speculation. But if, for example, there was an attempt to open up one of the three additional facilities -- or the three new, going from 15 to 18.

I acknowledge we're not adding new OTB facilities, but we are adding new simulcast facilities -- were -- were to go into a municipality, and that the municipality was struggling with the decision and there was a lot of disagreement, would -- would you ever envision an ability for the legislative delegation from that town to come to the Public Safety Committee for a public hearing?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Mr. President, through you, to Senator McKinney.

Well, total speculation, sir. I only can comment that, from my own experience on many issues in my own district, I would appear locally with regard to initiatives that were going on, planning and zoning things, and so forth. And if, for example, I and my colleagues felt that there were other venues which were appropriate and issues that were not totally completely dealt with, we would respond accordingly, sir.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

Thank you.

Mr. President, through you.

And Senator Hartley, I apologize. I think the sleep deprivation has forced me into even less coherence than normal.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

It's contagious.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

I think -- I think the -- the proper question to have ask you, which I will now ask -- if we could just strike the last two minutes of our colloquy -- would be, would the Legislature have the power to prohibit a new simulcast facility from going to a certain town?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Through you, Mr. President, to Senator McKinney.

With regard to the siting of locations 15, 16, 17, 18, that predates what we are discussing here. And so, unless the Legislature were to reach back by virtue of a new legislative proposal, we would not.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

So -- and through you, and I'm not talking about going backwards, but we -- we have here a bill that will add three new simulcast locations. And I would -- I would imagine if the bill said, three additional locations, comma, none of which shall be in the following

municipalities, that that might be legal for us to do that.

And so I guess I would ask you, one, do you think that would have been legal for us to do, and two, if we could do that, if the law passes -- and I understand it's late at night -- but if the law passes and there are -- they have the authority to add three new simulcast locations, would we have the right to come back and amend this law to say, three new -- three additional locations, but not here?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Mr. President, through you, and to Mr. -- to Senator McKinney.

This is getting somewhat convoluted. By virtue of the proposal we have in front of us, we will, depending upon the vote, be allowing those un-sited three to have the ability to simulcast. We are doing nothing to authorize those three because they exist.

And if you are asking me if we could change the decision of a local legislative body for one of these three, based upon my knowledge of this, I would have to say, no. If the local legislative body and the town, through all of its approval processes approved of it, then, once again, speaking only of those that do not have the simulcast -- not anything beyond that threshold -- that would be a decision that would have, at that point, been vetted and approved by their local community.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

Thank you.

And I don't -- I don't want to -- I was going to say, beat this issue like a dead horse, but that would be a little

bit --

SENATOR HARTLEY:

I'm missing that, Senator McKinney.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

-- I don't want to beat this issue up to much, but if the owners of the off-track betting facilities in Connecticut which, by virtue of this new law, allows them to add three new OTB simulcast centers anywhere in the State of Connecticut, were to announce their intentions a week, a month, a year from now, and to say, we're going to open up in these three new towns and the gaming policy board hasn't approved it, the commissioner hasn't approved it, maybe even they have, but it hasn't gone to the municipality, and maybe it was a town you represented or I represented, and we didn't want it, could we come in and amend this law and say, and three additional locations, comma, but not town X?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Mr. President, through you, to Senator McKinney.

I think we have both heard, we are the Legislature. We can do anything.

Thank you. Through you, Mr. --

THE CHAIR:

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

Thank you.

Sometimes I wish we couldn't do anything and everything, Senator Hartley. That's one thing we might agree on from

time to time.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

I agree.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

Senator Hartley, would you be kind -- and I have asked a lot of questions and you've been very patient and I appreciate that. You have a facility in Waterbury, which you represent and have represented for some time. Would you share with me how that facility works? Is it a good neighbor to the city?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. And through you, to Senator McKinney.

I must admit, Senator McKinney, I am not a seasoned gaming person and maybe that's the best way I can express this to you. However, I will say, under the new management, the facility has been entirely rehabbed. It is well-maintained. They are good neighbors. I have no complaints.

And I would also probably say that, in the past, that wasn't always the case, but with this owner, it has a new face and a new feel.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

And I thank you for that. And that's actually very consistent with what I've learned. And to me, that -- that is some good news and some bad news.

The good news is that it does appear that the current owners, Sportech, has done a significantly better job of improving facilities, is serious about bringing jobs to the State of Connecticut. They appear to be very successful at what they do, and I have no problem with that.

But the bad news is that -- is that, prior to Sportech, we can't necessarily say that these were great neighbors with great facilities improving neighborhoods.

And that leads me to be concerned about what happens after Sportech, should they decide that this is not the right place or the right business for them to be in. So that is -- that's always been a concern of mine, but I appreciate your response to that.

Mr. President, I want to thank Senator Hartley for answering my questions. I have a little bit more to say. I don't know if I'll have other questions for you, but I do appreciate your patience.

Mr. President, I've been very vocal in the past several years and especially more recently with respect to gambling and the idea of online gambling. And I say that as someone who probably, once a year -- I think this past year, twice -- went to one of the two tribal casinos in Connecticut for dinner and shows, went to a rodeo at the Mohican Sun several years ago. And it's a great entertainment venue.

I'm not a big gambler, don't really go there to gamble. In fact, don't go there to gamble, but I have no problem with the people who do. But I do have a problem with government giving its imprimatur of goodwill, and the State of Connecticut looking at gambling as part of our economic rebound, as part of the growth of our jobs base.

And -- and I don't say that because these companies are bad. Again, as I said, I'll repeat, I met officials at Sportech. They seem like great people. They showed me pictures of what they've done in New Haven and the jobs they've added. And I think that's great. But -- but the reality is we never focus on the downside of all of this, and we never put in our budgets money to deal with that downside.

Gambling is an addiction. It can be a bad problem for some

people who do it. And for those people, their lives are ruined and destroyed financially for years and years to come. And so with all of the other things that we have to do with respect to economic development, with respect to job creation, with respect to improving our urban areas in the state, I'm constantly bewildered at why gambling is always part of that focus.

I can't, for the life of me, understood why the Governor embraced online gambling as fast and as quickly and as strongly as he did. I think he's backed off a little bit from his initial comments, but I just can't imagine why we want that to be a focus of economic turnaround. And I don't care how much revenue it brings in. It's a bad deal for the State of Connecticut.

I remember when the two casinos were authorized and built and both tribes got their federal recognition differently, and then there was a move to have a casino in Bridgeport. And, in fact, that was a huge issue in the race that preceded the first time I ran for the 28th District between the two opponents for the seat that I now represent. One was against the casino in Bridgeport, one was for. And the person who won was the person who was against the casino.

But I remember meeting with people when I first ran and then won, and they approached me about talking to see if I would support a casino and gambling. And there's an off-track betting facility in Bridgeport, as we know. And I said to them, show me how this builds the economy in the area where it is. I've been to Atlantic City. And if you go outside the casinos in Atlantic City, you don't feel very safe. It's not the greatest place in the world.

And if you go into the neighborhoods where we have our two tribal casinos, take a circle, a radius around the casinos. Go find me a great restaurant. Go find me a great retail center. You can't because they can't compete with the casinos.

So not all gambling is positive for the State of Connecticut. And I happen to think with the continued push for online gambling, we're going to see that expansion happen at these OTB simulcasts. And again, if people, in their own free will, voluntarily want to go and gamble, they've earned their money, they can spend it any way they

want. I'm not trying to stop that, but I think we have enough already.

One of the things we always talk about in this circle is that we're a very small state. And we are a relatively small state. Do we need 18 simulcast places across the state?

I mean, when you look at where the existing locations are right now, we have one in East Haven -- and I thought we had one in New Haven, but I could be wrong. But we have one in Norwalk and we have one in Bridgeport, sort of serving the same constituency there. It's not hard to get from Bridgeport to Norwalk unless you go in rush hour. And I don't know -- I don't know if there are towns crying out for this or not.

You know, Mr. President, I think at 8:20 on -- on the last night of session, there are oftentimes when those of us in this circle have what amounts to a veto power on certain legislation like this, because we know that at midnight the clock strikes 12 and the legislative session is over. I'm not going to exercise that veto right.

There are a lot of many other good bills on the calendar that will fail and fall by the wayside were I to talk for the next three and half hours. And I simply don't think that's the fair or right thing to do to the other 35 members of this Senate and the members of the House who care about those bills.

I would just -- in the last few minutes, I'm going to speak, though. I would just say this. And I -- it's probably unfair for me to say it. It's probably too critical. But I don't think in this circle we're thinking about this enough. I don't think in this circle we're giving this bill and other bills like it with gambling enough thought as to what the full ramifications are.

We have a very good, reputable company that's come in and bought these facilities. They are doing good things and they've moved their headquarters and that's great, but I think that we haven't gone past that. I don't know that 36 of us have sat down and really talked about what the implications are going to be, and what other communities these facilities would go into and what that means for those communities.

One of the reasons why I am so vocal about stopping online gambling from coming into our state is because I have three kids, 16, 13 and 11, and they are on the Internet all the time. And they are on Internet sites that they're not supposed to be on.

They're downloading music and videos that you have to check off how old you are, but the security that's on the websites doesn't protect them. And that happens to all of us. And our kids are very influenced by what's happening in the world.

And so the more they're going to see off-track betting facilities, the more they're going to be bombarded with advertisements and marketing campaigns about gambling, the more desensitized they're going to be to it.

And with the ability and the breadth and the reach of the Internet, we are going to see gambling problems in the next 20 years continue to rise and rise and rise. And we've never shown the stomach to include the necessary money to fund the programs to help those people. We think it's great to get the revenue from the gambling, but we don't do enough to help those who have a problem.

So someday when you have a little extra time, get your laptop, Google gambling problems among teens. Find out how bad it can be. Find out how many families in Connecticut have gone bankrupt because of their addiction to gambling. Find out how many lives have been changed, families broken up, jobs lost. And then maybe we will not have this zeal to embrace more gambling that, I think, this Legislature and this State has, which I think is driven, ultimately, by a desire for more revenue. And that desire for more revenue sadly comes from our inability to stop spending so much money.

That's really where it comes down to. We spend so much money and we can't tax enough. And we understand that we can't keep increasing taxes so we look for every nickel, dime, penny, quarter, dollar, there is in every other way, whether it's fees or this or that. And gambling revenue is a great source of money.

I'm not sure when the first casino, Foxwoods, went in. I know I wasn't in office. It was long before then. But

even when I first ran, my constituents said -- and I don't even know if it was ever true -- wasn't all that gambling money supposed to go to education?

I think if they had known that that money was just going to go to our general fund to feed all the spending we would, the people would have had a different very look at all of the gambling that we have here in Connecticut.

For those reasons, Mr. President, and out of respect for my colleagues, I will sit down and urge as many colleagues as possible to vote no on this bill.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Will you remark further on the bill? Will you remark further on the bill?

If not, Mr. Clerk, please announce the pendency of a roll call vote. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

There is an immediate roll call vote in the Senate. All senators please return to the Chamber. Immediate roll call vote is ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all members voted? If all members have voted -- Have all members voted?

If all members have voted, please check the board to make sure your vote is actually recorded. If all members have voted, the machine will be locked, and the Clerk will announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

House Bill 5095.

Total Number Voting	36
Necessary for Adoption	19

Those Voting Yea 21
Those Voting Nay 15
Those Absent and Not Voting 0

THE CHAIR:

The bill in concurrence with the House passes.

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On page 10, Calendar Number 408, Substitute for House Bill Number 5499, AN ACT CONCERNING REGULATIONS RELATING TO HOSPICE CARE, as amended by House Amendment Schedule "A", favorable report of the Committee on Public Health.

(The President in the Chair.)

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gerratana. Good evening there, ma'am.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Good evening to you, Madam President.

Madam President, I move acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill in concurrence with the House.

THE CHAIR:

The motion is on acceptance and passage in concurrence with the House.

Will you remark, ma'am?

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Yes. Thank you, Madam President.

For the Senate circle here, I want to describe to you what the bill that we have before us as amended does. Currently, there is more than one level of care for people