

Written Testimony of the iDevelopment & Economic Association (iDEA)

New York State Assembly Standing Committee on Racing & Wagering and the Assembly Standing Committee on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse

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Introduction

iDEA represents a broad coalition of regulated online gaming and sports wagering operators and suppliers committed to creating a safe, transparent, and responsible entertainment environment. Our members – many of which are licensed in the state of New York – operate under some of the most rigorous regulatory frameworks in the world, guided by principles of consumer protection and responsible gaming. We share the legislature’s concern about ensuring that gambling remains a safe form of entertainment, and we welcome the opportunity to discuss how the regulated industry is leading in this area, and how regulation itself is the best tool for preventing harm.

Much of today’s debate centers on how legal, regulated online betting may contribute to gambling harms such as addiction or financial distress. However, credible research paints a more nuanced picture. The regulated market, with its robust consumer protections and advanced technological safeguards, has proven to be a powerful force for harm reduction when compared with the unregulated, offshore market. Simply put: where regulation exists, protection exists.

Building a Culture of Responsible Play

Licensed operators in New York and across the United States invest heavily in technologies and programs that encourage healthy play and early identification of risk. Many of these systems are unprecedented in their sophistication and simply do not exist in the unregulated market.

1. Behavioral Analytics and Early Detection

Regulated operators now deploy near real-time behavioral analytics and machine learning models that monitor dozens of player behaviors to help detect changes in play that signify risk early. These include triggers such as frequency of play, sudden deposit increases, loss chasing, or time-of-day activity. These tools, pioneered by companies established to minimize gambling harm, assign dynamic “risk scores” to player accounts. When elevated or an increase in risk is detected, the system can trigger operator-led interactions that are personalized to the players

including: pop-up messages encouraging breaks, reminders about spending limits, or referrals to responsible gaming resources.

Academic research¹ from Europe, where online gambling has been legal for more than two decades, has shown that such targeted, personalized interactions with players are more effective than blanket restrictions. The most effective type of engagement is when a player receives help, without judgement, and in a way that fosters a culture where responsible gaming is the norm.

2. Empowering Players with Control Tools

Regulated platforms provide robust tools for self-management, including deposit, wager, and loss limits, time-outs, reality checks, and self-exclusion options. Importantly, these features are available directly in-app and can be adjusted in real time, giving players agency over their behavior.

Along with self-management tools, operators also offer all players personalized information, insights, and support tailored to their unique gaming behaviors and preferences, helping them make informed decisions about their play. These tools are not just available to consumers; they are being used by consumers. Recently, FanDuel, one of New York's market leaders, reported that half of all players on their platform utilized their *My Spend* responsible gaming dashboard during the 2024-2025 NFL season. DraftKings, another leader in the New York market, has had over 21.5 million total visits to its *My Stat Sheet* platform since launching in 2024.

The industry's goal is to normalize the use of these tools—not only for those experiencing problems, but as standard safety features, much like seatbelts in cars. Operators also invest in staff training, dedicated responsible gaming teams, and continuous internal auditing to ensure these systems are effectively implemented.

3. Proactive Education and Health Partnerships

Beyond technology, the regulated industry works closely with public health professionals and treatment providers to connect at-risk players with support services. Partnerships with clinician-led providers, such as Birches Health and Kindbridge, ensure players have easy, free, and

¹ Auer, M., & Griffiths, M. D. (2013), Voluntary limit setting and player choice in online gambling: An empirical study of gambling behaviour, [Journal of Gambling Studies](#); Auer, M., & Griffiths, M. D. (2015), The use of personalized behavioral feedback for responsible gambling: Theoretical and empirical considerations, [Journal of Behavioral Addictions](#); Auer, M., Hopfgartner, N., & Griffiths, M. D. (2021), The impact of loss-limit reminders on gambling behavior: A real-world study, [International Gambling Studies](#).

confidential access to care. These collaborations go well beyond compliance checkboxes; they are part of a comprehensive commitment to player wellbeing.

ROGA's [Know Your Play](#) campaign website, which provides tailored responsible gaming, financial literacy, and mental health education to college students, has had over 70,000 unique visitors across all jurisdictions with legal sports betting. ROGA is also working with universities to help deliver these learnings directly to students.

The American Gaming Association's "[Have A Game Plan](#)" and "[Play Smart From the Start](#)" initiatives have been widely adopted by operators to promote responsible play messages and normalize healthy gaming habits. These campaigns emphasize that regulated entertainment can be safe and enjoyable when supported by data-driven protections.

The Impact of Legalization

Recent studies have challenged the notion that legal mobile sports betting and iGaming have produced widespread social or financial harm. The Progressive Policy Institute's 2025 report, *Balancing Innovation and Risk: The Case of Legalized Sports Betting*², found no evidence of a surge in bankruptcies or consumer credit downgrades in states that adopted mobile betting early. In fact, consumer bankruptcies declined by 40% in those states between 2019 and 2024. This decline was greater than the national average decline of 34%. The same analysis found that average credit scores in early-adopter states rose at the same pace as the national average. PPI concluded that legalized sports betting "serves as an economic innovation that generates positive consumer benefits," particularly when supported by strong regulatory safeguards.

Similarly, a 2025 study³ by economist Kurt Rotthoff of Seton Hall University found that legalized sports betting has been a net positive for states, reducing illegal activity and offering new layers of consumer safety and transparency. Rotthoff notes that prohibitions do not eliminate betting, they merely push it underground. Legalization, by contrast, replaces criminal operators with licensed ones accountable to state regulators. Further, Rotthoff's study points to research that found that only 7.7 percent of US Households place sports bets averaging \$102 per quarter (every three months), or less than 1 percent of income. This data underscores that legal sports

² The Progressive Policy Institute, [Balancing Innovation and Risk: The Case of Legalized Sports Betting](#), September 10, 2025.

³ Professor Kurt W. Rotthoff; Seton Hall University, [Analyzing the Costs and Benefits of Legalized Sports Betting](#), Spring 2025.

betting is, for the vast majority of consumers, a low-stakes entertainment activity, not a driver of financial distress.

A 2024 study by economists Bersak, Gearhart and Sonchak-Ardan⁴, which analyzed data from nearly 2 million respondents to the Household Pulse Survey⁵, reached the same conclusion from a mental health perspective. Based on the data the expansion of legal online betting has not led to population-wide declines in mental health or spikes in financial distress. While public perception often links increased access with higher risk, the data suggest that legalization has instead brought betting activity into safer, better-regulated environments.

The Value of the Regulated Market

The benefits of regulation are clear when compared to the unregulated, offshore market. Illegal gambling sites lack identity verification, self-exclusion tools, deposit limits, or responsible gaming messaging. They do not contribute tax revenue for education or treatment, and they offer no transparency on fairness or player funds. In these environments, there is no recourse for players who experience fraud or addiction.

In contrast, the legal market in New York operates with comprehensive oversight. Every licensed operator must verify player identity, track transactions, prevent underage access, and monitor betting behavior. These requirements, combined with technology-led responsible gaming systems, create a foundation for safer play. When consumers are directed toward the legal market, they are automatically directed toward protection, accountability, and help (when needed).

The regulated market is also taking proactive steps to support players. The Responsible Online Gaming Association (ROGA) is working with LexisNexis Risk Solutions to develop a multi-state self-exclusion system⁶ to ensure individuals who choose to self-exclude can do so comprehensively across various platforms and across multiple jurisdictions.

⁴ Professors Tim Bersak, Richard Gearhart, Lyudmyla Sonchak-Ardan, [Impacts of Access to Legal Mobile Sports Betting on Self-Reported Mental Health: Evidence from Household Pulse Survey](#), August 14, 2024.

⁵ United States Census Bureau, [Household Pulse Survey: Measuring Emergent Social and Economic Matters Facing U.S. Households](#), data from 2020-2024.

⁶ Responsible Online Gaming Association, [ROGA Selects LexisNexis Risk® Solutions As Data Clearinghouse Technology Provider](#), September 30, 2025.

Regulation has another crucial benefit: visibility. In the illegal market, problem gambling behavior is invisible to lawmakers, regulators and public health agencies. In the regulated market, it can be observed, understood, and addressed in real time.

Addressing Concerns About Game Design

Lawmakers and public health experts have raised concerns about how digital game design can influence player behavior. These questions deserve careful, evidence-driven answers. While some critics suggest that certain features are “designed to addict,” current research does not identify any specific design element as a direct cause of gambling harm. Instead, regulated markets such as the U.K. and Denmark are advancing responsible design principles based on behavioral science to ensure transparency in game mechanics, pace of play, and volatility are supported by continued academic and regulatory collaboration. At the same time these countries are encouraging continuous research and collaboration with industry and academia.

Responsible design is about giving players clear information and meaningful choice. The tools to promote responsible play should be clearly listed and available from any screen or page on a wagering app or website. The most promising interactions are those that meet players where they are: using personalized prompts, dynamic limits, and transparent design, not one-size-fits-all restrictions that can unintentionally drive players to unregulated alternatives.

Conclusion

New York’s regulatory framework has made the state a leader in consumer protection, but it can go further by recognizing that regulated markets are the solution, not the problem. The evidence is clear: where betting is legal and well-regulated, consumer harms are lower, accountability is higher, and public trust grows.

Our members remain committed to collaborating with lawmakers, regulators, and health experts to refine responsible gaming policies and ensure the highest standards of player protection. The path forward should be guided by data, transparency, and partnership—not fear or stigma.

Legalization has brought gambling into the light, where it can be monitored, measured, and made safer. New York should continue to embrace that progress.