

March 16, 2026

The Honorable Brett Guthrie  
Chairman, House Committee on  
Energy and Commerce  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone  
Ranking Member, House Committee  
on Energy and Commerce  
2323 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Guthrie and Ranking Member Pallone,

On behalf of the Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG), a coalition of national organizations representing consumers, families, mental health and addiction providers, advocates and other stakeholders committed to strengthening access to high-quality mental and behavioral health care, we respectfully request the Committee's consideration of the bipartisan *Providing Opportunities for Individuals in Need of Treatment and Support Act* (POINTS Act) (H.R. 7875) led by Representatives Houchin (R-IN-09), Salinas (D-OR-06), Miller-Meeks (R-IA-01), and Carter (R-LA-02).

According to the *Diagnosics and Statistical Manual (DSM) 5*, gambling addiction is a clinical behavioral health condition characterized by persistent and recurrent problematic gambling behavior that leads to significant impairment and distress. The National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) conservatively estimates that 2.5 million U.S. adults (1%) meet the criteria for a severe gambling addiction with an additional 5-8 million (2-3%) experiencing a mild or moderate gambling addiction.<sup>1</sup> While gambling disorders can affect people of all backgrounds, young men, particularly those under 35 years of age, exhibit a greater risk of developing a gambling addiction at nearly double the rate of women.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, gambling addiction is associated with an increased threat to mental and public health for struggling Americans and their families, including high rates of filing for bankruptcy, an increase in family-based violence and separation including domestic violence and/or child neglect incidences, and the highest rate of suicidal ideation and behavior among all addictions<sup>3,4</sup> Left untreated, gambling addiction costs the U.S. \$14 billion per year.<sup>1</sup>

Accessibility to gambling has skyrocketed following the 2018 Supreme Court decision reversing the *Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act of 1992* (PASPA Act), allowing States to legalize and regulate sports betting. There have since been 38 States, joined by Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico, that have legalized sports betting – 30 of which have legalized mobile or online sports betting, increasing access

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<sup>1</sup> FAQs: What is Problem Gambling? (n.d.). *National Council on Problem Gambling*. Retrieved January 27, 2026, from <https://www.ncpgambling.org/help-treatment/faqs-what-is-problem-gambling/>

<sup>2</sup> Huble, C. (2025, July 17). National Council on Problem Gambling Survey Shows Drop in Problem Gambling Risk, Highlights Ongoing Challenges. *National Council on Problem Gambling*. <https://www.ncpgambling.org/news/national-council-on-problem-gambling-survey-shows-drop-in-problem-gambling-risk-highlights-ongoing-challenges/>

<sup>3</sup> Muelleman, R., DenOtter, T., Wadman, M., Tran, T., & Anderson, J. (2002). Problem gambling in the partner of the emergency department patient as a risk factor for intimate partner violence. *The Journal of Emergency Medicine*, 23, 307–12

<sup>4</sup> Vijayakumar, L., & Vijayakumar, V. (2023). Online gambling and suicide: Gambling with lives. *Indian journal of psychiatry*, 65(1), 3–4. [https://doi.org/10.4103/indianjpsychiatry.indianjpsychiatry\\_817\\_22](https://doi.org/10.4103/indianjpsychiatry.indianjpsychiatry_817_22)

to gambling platforms.<sup>5</sup> State surveys, as well as various studies, have shown problematic gambling indicators are on the rise as accessibility has increased.<sup>6</sup> NCPG is particularly concerned about the large increase in problem gambling risk among young males – one study found that one in ten men aged 18-30 indicate a gambling problem.<sup>7</sup>

The POINTS Act addresses the gambling addiction crisis by allocating federal funding into a competitive, discretionary grant program under the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The grant program will support States and Tribal entities in their efforts to establish, improve, or expand programs to prevent, screen, intervene and treat problem gambling and gambling addiction in the U.S. Utilizing 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the existing federal excise tax on wagers paid by the gambling industry, the grant program will prioritize those populations most vulnerable to gambling addiction, including men, youth, Native Americans, servicemembers, and veterans. The POINTS Act allows funding for both community and statewide prevention, intervention, and treatment activities including providing specialized outpatient treatment, peer-support, awareness, and other evidence-based interventions to help those in need.

The POINTS Act is the first bipartisan bill of its kind to direct federal funds to address gambling addiction in the U.S. As more States continue to legalize sports betting and online gambling platforms, we fear the prevalence of gambling addiction will continue to rise, as well as the related risks including bankruptcy, family instability, and suicide. Congressional intervention is imperative to ensure American families have access to the resources and treatment options they need to recover from gambling addiction. We sincerely ask for your consideration to endorse the POINTS Act and lead the conversation among your fellow committee members. Your leadership bolsters our efforts to support the millions of Americans and their families struggling with gambling addiction every day. We thank you for your continued leadership in the mental health and addiction space and look forward to continuing our work with you on this pressing issue.

Sincerely,

Active Minds

American Art Therapy Association

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work

American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists (AAPP)

American Association on Health and Disability

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

American Group Psychotherapy Association

American Psychiatric Association

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<sup>5</sup> Waters, M. (2025, November 21). Sports Betting States: Latest US Legislation & Bill Tracker. *Legal Sports Report*. <https://www.legalsportsreport.com/sports-betting-states/>

<sup>6</sup> IDHS: *Statewide Gambling and Problem Gambling Needs Assessment*. (n.d.). <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=144073>

<sup>7</sup> Schipper, D. (2024, September 19). FDU Poll finds Online Betting Leads to Problems for Young Men. *Fairleigh Dickinson University*. <https://www.fdu.edu/news/fdu-poll-finds-online-betting-leads-to-problems-for-young-men/>

American Psychiatric Nurses Association  
American Psychological Association Services  
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare (AABH)  
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)  
Centerstone  
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder  
Crisis Residential Association  
Crisis Text Line  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)  
Employees Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA)  
Huntington's Disease Society of America  
Inseparable  
International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium (IC&RC)  
International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses  
Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance  
Mental Health America  
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Association for Rural Mental Health (NARMH)  
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors (NACBHDD)  
National Association of Social Workers (NASW)  
National Board for Certified Counselors & Affiliates  
National Council on Problem Gambling  
National Register of Health Service Psychologists  
National Women's Shelter Network, Inc.  
Psychotherapy Action Network  
Recovery Innovations  
REDC Consortium  
SMART Recovery  
The Jed Foundation  
The Kennedy Forum