



Testimony in Support of S.F. 4474 (Rasmusson)
Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee
March 24, 2026

Dear Members of the Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee:

The Minnesota Catholic Conference, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Minnesota, writes in support of S.F. 4474 (Rasmusson), which would ban the growing phenomenon of online sweepstakes casino-style gambling. Minnesota does not allow online gambling, and casino-style games are limited to tribal reservations. The law should clarify that this activity, which was estimated to already be a \$4.6 billion dollar industry nationwide in 2024, is not permitted in Minnesota.

We oppose gambling expansion beyond its current limits. Apart from the state lottery, gambling is generally limited to in-person social settings such as tribal casinos, horse tracks, bingo halls, and pull-tabs at bars. And there is good reason for that. Although it can be, for some, occasional entertainment, for many it is harmful and addictive, and destroys families and finances. It produces no social benefit, and the taxpayer picks up the costs for the harm it creates.

Limiting it to particular in-person social settings produces the type of friction needed to prevent people from having an addictive activity at their fingertips and without accountability. Online sweepstakes fuel greater gambling addiction by their design. Sometimes this is by luring consumers in with “free entry” only to offer them the chance to pay later for other games or contests, which can be very difficult to resist due to the predatory tactics many online gambling sites in general use.

This kind of gambling can function like a “gateway drug,” leading consumers to ramp up their gambling. It compels participants to keep entering and any win, with its accompanying rush of dopamine, only increases this compulsion. In addition, the use of “dual currency” and its substitution of money for coins or other tokens can detach consumers from how much they are truly spending on a game. This is especially true when more tokens can be bought with a few taps or even a quick facial scan as opposed to having to walk to a cashier and hand over cash in a physical casino, again bringing in the problem of increased accessibility.

Interestingly, many opponents and proponents of online sports gambling agree, although for different reasons, that sweepstakes gambling should be banned. This is one of the gambling bills that should be prioritized this year.

Thank you for your consideration.

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