



Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PA Gaming Control Board Launches Awareness Campaign Focused on Adults Leaving Children Unattended to Gamble at Casinos

HARRISBURG, PA: The Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board (Board) today at its public meeting announced the launch of a new awareness campaign aimed at preventing children from being left unattended while an adult supervisor (parent, relative, guardian) gambles in a casino.

The “Don’t Gamble with Kids” campaign was spurred by the Board’s concern over the number of minors who are being left in vehicles in casino parking lots or in hotel rooms attached to or near a Pennsylvania casino.

Since the start of 2022, the Board’s Bureau of Casino Compliance has recorded 269 incidents involving 441 minors who were left unattended while one or more of the adults responsible for them chose to gamble in a casino. Included in the number are 68 who were 6 years old or under. This is compared to 171 incidents involving 279 minors in 2021.

“This has been an issue dating back to the opening of casinos in 2006. However, as the number of venues has increased and new types of gaming have been added, more incidents have been reported,” says Gaming Control Board Executive Director Kevin O’Toole.

O’Toole says the unfortunate frequency of these dangerous events has led the Board to initiate an awareness program with two audiences in mind – those who are responsible for children in their care, and the general public visiting casinos.

“We are hopeful this campaign will raise awareness not only for those who gamble and are responsible for children, but also for the gaming public who we hope will be more diligent in looking out for children at risk. Ultimately, we want everyone to understand the scope of this problem and know what to do if confronted with a situation in a parking lot, hotel or elsewhere. That is, immediately report the situation to casino or hotel security, who have extensive training on how to appropriately respond.”

The Board also wants adult caregivers who may choose to leave a child unattended to enter a casino, to know of potential consequences of their actions. These include:

- Up to a lifetime ban by the individual casino in which the incident took place;
- Placement on the Board’s publicly available Exclusion List, in which individuals lose the privileges of entering all casinos in the Commonwealth;
- Criminal charges filed by law enforcement; and,
- Investigation by the applicable county’s Department of Children and Youth Services.

“More important than any liability faced by these adults, however, is the safety of these children.”, O’Toole stated, adding “The welfare and safety of the minors is at the heart of the Board’s campaign and all adults should consider this before deciding to leave a child unattended.”

“Leaving minors unattended in the parking lot or garage, a hotel, or other venue at a casino creates a potentially unsafe and dangerous environment for the children,” O’Toole says. “In its role to protect

the public, the Board hopes to bring awareness of this very important issue through the 'Don't Gamble with Kids' campaign."

The "Don't Gamble with Kids" campaign will include television and radio public service announcements, social media posts and videos, printed materials, and a website, www.DontGamblewithKids.org.

The Board is also noting that adults who may choose to leave children unattended to gamble in a casino may be exhibiting signs of a compulsive gambling problem. To that end, there is a link on the campaign's website that provides the individual with information on the Board's compulsive and problem gambling program website, www.responsibleplay.pa.gov.

About the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board

The Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board is tasked to oversee all aspects of gambling involving 16 land-based casinos, online casino games, retail and online sports wagering, and Video Gaming Terminals (VGTs) at qualified truck stops, along with the regulation of online fantasy sports contests.

The land-based casino industry in Pennsylvania consists of six racetrack (Category 1) casinos, five stand-alone (Category 2) casinos, two resort (Category 3) casinos and three mini-casinos (Category 4). Casino expansion will continue over the next couple of years with the anticipated openings of up to two additional Category 4 casinos. A significant job generator in the Commonwealth, casinos and the other types of Board-regulated gaming generated over \$2 billion in tax revenue during the 2021/2022 State Fiscal Year.

Additional information about both the PGCB's gaming regulatory efforts and Pennsylvania's gaming industry can be found at <https://gamingcontrolboard.pa.gov>. You can also follow the agency on Twitter by choosing **@PAGamingControl**.

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