



Madison Brame

From: Tara Smith <tara@betterinstitute.com>
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2024 2:14 PM
To: GB, PGCB Regulations
Subject: [External] Regulation # 125-250 - Oppose Changes to Pennsylvania's Self-Exclusion Program

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Dear Mr. Wood,

I am writing to express my **strong opposition** to the proposed changes to Pennsylvania's Self-Exclusion Program (SEP) under Regulation # 125-250. The current proposal to automatically remove individuals from the SEP after their chosen term (1 year or 5 years) expires is deeply concerning and counterproductive to the program's intent.

The SEP is a vital tool for individuals struggling with gambling addiction. It allows them to voluntarily ban themselves from casinos and other gambling establishments, providing a crucial layer of protection during vulnerable periods. By automatically removing individuals from the list, the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board is undermining the efficacy of this program and putting vulnerable individuals at increased risk of relapse and further harm.

Here's why this change is detrimental:

- **Increased Risk of Relapse:** Individuals who have chosen self-exclusion are often battling a serious addiction. Removing them from the list without their explicit request increases the likelihood of relapse, especially during moments of weakness.
- **Burden on Individuals:** The proposed change shifts the burden of responsibility entirely onto the individual. People struggling with addiction may not always have the capacity to consistently renew their self-exclusion, especially when facing urges to gamble.
- **Contradicts Consumer Protection:** Self-exclusion programs are designed to protect consumers. This change directly contradicts that principle by making it easier for individuals to return to gambling environments despite prior attempts to self-protect.
- **Potential for Tragic Consequences:** Relapse can have devastating consequences, including financial ruin, relationship breakdown, and even suicide. This policy change increases the potential for such tragic outcomes.

I urge the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board to reconsider this proposal and correct the "other list" of interactive gaming, fantasy contests and Video Gaming Terminals (VGT), to where all individuals remain on the self-exclusion list until they actively request removal. This approach prioritizes the safety and well-being of individuals struggling with gambling addiction and aligns with the true purpose of the Self-Exclusion Program.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Tara Smith, MSW, LSW

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Tara Smith, LSW (she/her)

Therapist

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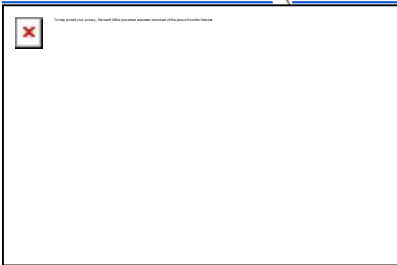
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