



Madison Brame

From: Amy Sechrist <amy.sechrist@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, November 1, 2024 11:06 AM
To: GB, PGCB Regulations
Subject: [External] Regulation # 125-250 – Opposition of Changes to PGCB Self-Exclusion

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Dear Mr. Wood,

I am writing as a board-certified addiction prevention specialist to express my **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 concerning and ultimately 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 platforms, providing a crucial layer of protection during vulnerable periods. By automatically removing individuals from the list, the efficacy of this program is reduced, which puts vulnerable individuals at increased risk of relapse and further harm.

My primary concerns regarding this change are related to:

- **Increased Risk of Relapse:** Individuals who have chosen self-exclusion are often battling a serious gambling disorder. Removing them from the list without their request increases the risk of relapse, especially during moments of weakness.
- **Protection of Vulnerable Individuals:** Self-Exclusion is a resource for those who are vulnerable to negative consequences of gambling disorder. Changes that make it easier to return to gambling put these individuals in a potentially dangerous position.
- **Potential for Tragic Consequences:** Relapse can have a devastating impact on individuals, including financial issues, relationship problems, legal conflicts and even suicidal ideation. This policy change increases the potential for such tragic outcomes.
- **Upholding Safer Gambling Practices:** The gambling industry has a responsibility to operate in a socially responsible manner. This includes implementing effective measures to prevent and mitigate the harms of gambling disorder. Changing the Casino SEP from how it currently exists would be a step in the opposite direction.
- **Preservation of Public Safety:** Problem gambling can have severe negative impacts on individuals, families, and communities. By maintaining a strong self-exclusion program, we can help to protect public safety and well-being and reduce social costs of problem gambling.

As a prevention specialist at an award-winning addiction prevention non-profit in Lancaster County, I urge the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board to reconsider this proposal, and instead, change the interactive gaming, fantasy contests and Video Gaming Terminals (VGT) SEP's to match the current Casino SEP, 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 disorder and aligns with the true purpose of Self-Exclusion Programs.

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

Sincerely,

Amy

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