



House Study Committee on Gaming in the State of Georgia

Final Report

Chairman Marcus Wiedower
Representative, 121st District
(Resigned October 28, 2025)

Representative Shaw Blackmon
Representative, 146th District

Representative Matt Hatchett
Representative, 155th District

Representative Chuck Martin
Representative, 49th District

Representative Yasmin Neal
Representative, 79th District

Representative Alan Powell
Representative, 33rd District

Representative Ron Stephens
Representative, 164th District

2025

Prepared by:

House Budget and Research Office

Background and Scope

Scope of Study Committee

During the 2025 Session, the Georgia House of Representatives passed [HR 753](#), which created the [House Study Committee on Gaming in the State of Georgia](#) to study the pros and cons of expanding gaming within the state. In particular, the committee was tasked with reviewing: 1) how gaming would contribute to the Georgia economy regarding economic development and quality of jobs while weighed against social and societal ills; 2) whether legalization of gaming would increase tax revenues and aid the budget; 3) whether Georgians are traveling out of state to game currently; and 4) whether horse racing would expand horse breeding, raising, and training within the state.

The committee heard approximately 12 hours of testimony across four meetings held in, respectively, Watkinsville, Atlanta, Savannah, and Atlanta. Members of the committee and the public were further informed through a total of 36 presentations throughout the committee meetings from 35 total presenters.

Recent History of Legislative Efforts

During the 2025 Session, the following bills were introduced in the Georgia General Assembly:

- [HB 686](#) (Rep. Marcus Wiedower) - 'Georgia Sports Betting Act'
 - o With the accompanying constitutional amendment: [HR 450](#)
- [HB 910](#) (Rep. Matt Hatchett) – 'Georgia Lottery Game of Sports Betting Act'
- [SB 208](#) (Sen. Billy Hickman) – 'Georgia Lottery Game of Sports Betting Act'
- [SR 131](#) (Sen. Carden Summers) – Constitutional Amendment for Betting and Casino Gambling.

Over the last decade, there have been other study committees to review gaming and whether to expand it in the state. The most recent was the 2019 Special Committee on Economic Growth, which was co-chaired by Rep. Brett Harrell, Rep. Alan Powell, and Rep. Ron Stephens.¹ That same year, the Senate also reviewed gaming-related issues through their Senate Gaming and Pari-Mutuel Wagering on Horse Racing and Growing Georgia's Equine Industry Study Committee, which issued a report.² In 2015, the House created the House Study Committee on the Preservation of the HOPE Scholarship Program, which met jointly with the Senate and was co-

¹ "Special Committee on Economic Growth," Georgia House of Representatives, <https://www.house.ga.gov/Committees/en-US/EconomicGrowth.aspx> (2019).

² "The Final Report of the Senate Gaming and Pari-Mutuel Wagering on Horse Racing and Growing Georgia's Equine Industry Study Committee," Georgia State Senate, <https://www.senate.ga.gov/committees/Documents/FinalReportofTheSenateGamingandParimutuelWagering.pdf> (2019).

chaired by Rep. Matt Ramsey and Sen. Brandon Beach.³ The House issued a final report from that study committee.⁴

Meetings

First Meeting

Monday, July 28 ([Video](#))
Oconee County Administrative Building (Watkinsville)

Attendance: Chairman Marcus Wiedower, Rep. Chuck Martin, Rep. Matt Hatchett, Rep. Yasmin Neal, Rep. Alan Powell, and Rep. Ron Stephens. Rep. Al Williams, Rep. Stacey Evans, and Rep. Holt Persinger were also in attendance.

- 1) Brief Remarks from John E. Daniell. ([Link](#))
 - Chairman, Oconee County Board of Commissioners. [Bio](#).
- 2) Introduction from Members of the Committee. ([Link](#))
- 3) Brief remarks from Chairman Powell re 2019 Special Committee on Economic Growth. ([Link](#))
- 4) *Mike Griffin* ([Link](#)):
 - Georgia Baptist Mission Board. [Website](#).
 - Topic: Harms of allowing gambling in Georgia.
- 5) *Teri Sasseville* (**Was not present**) ([Link](#))
 - Moms Against Gambling. [Website](#).
 - Topic: Harms of allowing gambling in Georgia.
- 6) *Eric Nordin* ([Link](#)):
 - CEO, Aurify Gaming. [Website](#).
 - Topic: Experience as a Georgia-based manufacturer of electronic games for casinos.
- 7) *Ed Clark* ([Link](#)):
 - President, Echo Park Speedway (formerly, Atlanta Motor Speedway). [Bio](#). [Website](#).
 - Topics: Echo Park's interest in building a casino in Georgia and economic impact.

³ "Study Committee on the Preservation of the HOPE Scholarship Program," Georgia House of Representatives, http://www.house.ga.gov/Committees/en-US/Preservation_of_Hope.aspx.

⁴ "Final Report of the House Study Committee on the Preservation of the HOPE Scholarship Program," Georgia House of Representatives, https://www.house.ga.gov/Documents/CommitteeDocuments/2015/Preservation_HOPE/HOPE%20Preservation%20Report%20-%20Final%201.11.16.pdf (2015).

- 8) *Paul Smith* ([Link](#)):
- Executive Director, Citizen Impact USA. [Website](#).
 - Topic: Opposition to gambling.

- 9) *Pam Hendricks* ([Link](#))
- Concerned citizen.

[Opportunity was provided for additional public comment.]

Second Meeting

Monday, August 25 ([Video](#))
Georgia State Capitol, Room 341 (Atlanta)

Attendance: Chairman Marcus Wiedower, Rep. Shaw Blackmon, Rep. Matt Hatchett, Rep. Chuck Martin, Rep. Yasmin Neal, Rep. Alan Powell, and Rep. Ron Stephens.

- 1) *Jason Saine* ([Link](#)): Financial implications of sports betting and experiences in North Carolina.
 - Former North Carolina State Representative, former Senior Chair of the House Appropriations Committee, and former Senior Chair of the House Finance Committee; Partner, The Southern Group. [Website](#).
- 2) Presentation from:
 - *Scott Warfield* ([Link](#)):
 - o Vice President of Gaming, PGA Tour. [Bio](#); and
 - *Joe Pierce* ([Link](#)):
 - o SVP and General Counsel, AMB Sports & Entertainment. [Bio](#).
 - Topic: Sports betting perspective from the leagues.
- 3) *Dr. Jay Albanese* ([Link](#)):
 - Professor, Virginia Commonwealth University, L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs. [Bio](#).
 - Topic: Casino Gambling's Impact on Crime.
 - Author of "Casino Gambling Impacts on Crime and Public Safety: A Review of 30 Years of Research" ([Dec. 2019](#)).
- 4) *Richard Lackey, Jr.* ([Link](#))
 - Founder and CEO of City Commercial Real Estate, Inc. [Bio](#).
 - Topics: Potential casino sites, how casinos make their property decisions (i.e., site criteria), and the additional property ventures that could populate around a casino (restaurants, entertainment venues, hotels, and housing).
- 5) *Josh Swissman* ([Link](#))
 - Founding Partner and Managing Director, GMA Consulting. [Bio](#).

- Topics: Potential revenue impacts for the different types of gaming in Georgia; ethical considerations; and public policy considerations for the different types of gaming.
- 6) *Christopher M. Gordon* ([Link](#)):
- President of Wynn Development for Wynn Resorts. [Bio](#).
 - Topic: Vision of an integrated city resort.
- 7) *Marcus Glover* ([Link](#)):
- Executive Vice President of Global Operations and Former Chief Operating Officer, Bally's Corporation. [Bio](#).
- 8) *Tom Lee* ([Link](#)):
- Former Vice-Chair, Tennessee Sports Wagering Council; Partner, Nelson Mullins. [Bio](#).
 - Topic: Regulatory experiences in Tennessee.
- 9) *Ryan Soultz* ([Link](#)):
- Vice President for Government Affairs, Boyd Gaming.
 - Topics: Investment, jobs, and discussion regarding existing properties and a new property being developed in Virginia.
- 10) *Joseph D'Angelo* ([Link](#)):
- Church Ambassador Network Director, Frontline Policy.
 - Topic: Opposition to gaming.
- 11) Presentation from Gaming and Leisure Properties, Inc. ([Link](#)):
- *Melissa Furillo*:
 - o VP of Regulatory and Legal Affairs. [Bio](#); and
 - *Steve Ladany*:
 - o SVP, Chief Development Officer. [Bio](#).
 - Topics: REITs, Owning and Developing Land and Leasing Properties; Development Impacts; and Community Relationships.
- 12) Presentation from:
- *Brent Pinkston* ([Link](#)):
 - o EVP, Chief Operating Officer. [Bio](#).
 - *Sheriff Heath Jackson* ([Link](#))
 - o Escambia County Sheriff's Office (Brewton, Alabama). [Website](#).
 - Topics: Public safety experience with casinos in Alabama and discussion re Wind Creek's operations.
- 13) *Jeremy Kudon* ([Link](#)):
- Partner, Orrick. [Bio](#); President of Sports Betting Alliance. [Website](#).
 - Topics: Responsible gaming, legal landscape for current operators, and VPNs.

14) *Lindsay Slader* ([Link](#))

- SVP of Compliance, GeoComply. [Website](#).
- Topics: Geofencing and related data.

15) *David L. Morgan, Jr.* ([Link](#)):

- Government Affairs Associate, Reason Foundation. Bio.

16) *John "J.T." Foley* ([Link](#)):

- Executive Director, Coalition for Fantasy Sports. [Bio](#).
- Topic: Fantasy Sports.

17) *Stuart Wilkinson* (Was not present)

- Director of Government Affairs, PrizePicks.
- Topic: Fantasy sports and current investment in Georgia.

[Opportunity was provided for additional public comment.]

Third Meeting

Monday, September 29 ([Video](#))
Savannah Technical College (Savannah)

Attendance: Chairman Marcus Wiedower, Rep. Matt Hatchett, Rep. Yasmin Neal (Zoom), Rep. Alan Powell (Zoom), and Rep. Ron Stephens. Rep. Al Williams (Zoom) and Sen. Billy Hickman were also in attendance.

1) *Remarks from Robert Grant* ([Link](#))

- Vice President for Community and College Relations, Savannah Technical College. [Bio](#).

2) *Damon Thayer* ([Link](#))

- Former Kentucky State Senator and former Kentucky Majority Floor Leader; CEO, Thayer Communications and Consulting. [Bio](#).
- Topics: Pari-mutuel legislation in KY; considerations when looking at horse racing.

3) *Adam Koenig* ([Link](#))

- Former Kentucky State Representative, former Chairman of the House Licensing, Occupations, and Administrative Regulations Committee; Independent Consultant, Koenig Public Policy and Political Consulting; and Executive Director of the Kentucky Quarter Horse Racing Association. [Bio](#).
- Topics: Experience with sports betting and pari-mutuel legislation in KY; considerations when looking at horse racing and sports betting legislation.

4) *Dr. Brad R. Humphreys* ([Link](#))

- Professor of Economics, West Virginia University; Editorial Board Member of the Journal of Sports Economics, the International Journal of Sport Finance, the International Journal

of Sport Management and Marketing, the International Journal of Sport Marketing and Sponsorship, the International Journal of Empirical Economics, and International Gambling Studies. [Bio](#). [Research](#).

- Topics: Research into how adding additional forms of gaming affects the existing market; the dynamics of who is betting on sports; research into labor market impact and economic impact of casinos on surrounding areas; the mental health impact of legalized sports betting; and findings from West Virginia regarding the local horse racing industry.

5) *Jeanne Seaver* ([Link](#))

- Founder and President, Moms Against Gambling. [Website](#).
- Topic: Opposition to gaming.

6) *Chris Cylke* ([Link](#))

- Senior Vice President of Government Relations, American Gaming Association. [Bio](#).
- Topic: What are sports prediction markets and contracts and how are they being used to offer similar bets to traditional sports betting.

7) *Dr. Adam Goodie* ([Link](#))

- Associate Dean of Franklin College of Arts and Sciences, University of Georgia; Professor, Department of Psychology. [Bio](#).
- Topics: Brain science of gaming and who is most affected by problem gaming.

8) *Neil Gerstenberger* ([Link](#))

- Georgia Crime Information Center Administrative Officer, Georgia Bureau of Investigation.
- Topics: Background check process and vetting for applications; current timeline for implementing systems with FBI and likely timeline for implementation; what agencies or organizations can receive records; and who is being investigated as part of the application.

9) *Rian Ringsrud* ([Link](#))

- Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration, Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL). [Bio](#).
- Topics: How lottery funding is currently being used to fund Georgia Pre-K; what programs DECAL currently provides.

10) *Robin Barrow* ([Link](#))

- President, Georgia Quarter Horse Association. [Bio](#). [Website](#).
- Topics: The current horse racing industry in Georgia and recommended protections for horses.

[Opportunity was provided for additional public comment.]

Fourth Meeting

Thursday, October 16 ([Video](#))
Georgia State Capitol, Room 606 (Atlanta)

Attendance: Chairman Marcus Wiedower, Rep. Matt Hatchett, Rep. Yasmin Neal, Rep. Alan Powell, and Rep. Ron Stephens. Rep. Al Williams was also in attendance.

- 1) Remarks from Chairman Wiedower and committee members.
- 2) *Les Bernal* ([Link](#))
 - Executive Director, Stop Predatory Gambling. [Bio](#). [Website](#).
 - Effects of predatory gambling.
- 3) *Jeanne Seaver* ([Link](#))
 - Founder and President, Moms Against Gambling. [Website](#).
- 4) *Dr. Harry Levant* ([Link](#))
 - Director of Gambling Policy, Public Health Advocacy Institute, Northeastern University School of Law. [Bio](#).

[Opportunity was provided for additional public comment.]

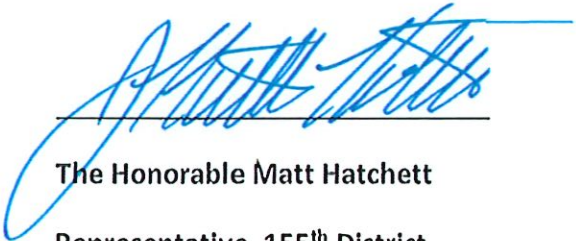
Speaker Burns, these are the recorded proceedings of your House Study Committee on Gaming in the State of Georgia.

Respectfully Submitted,

A dark ink signature, likely of Shaw Blackmon, written above a horizontal line.

The Honorable Shaw Blackmon
Representative, 146th District

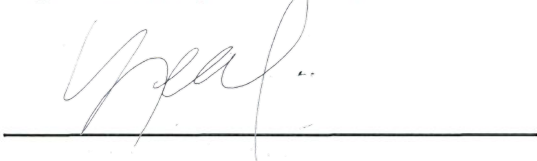
The Honorable Marcus Wiedower
Representative, 121st District

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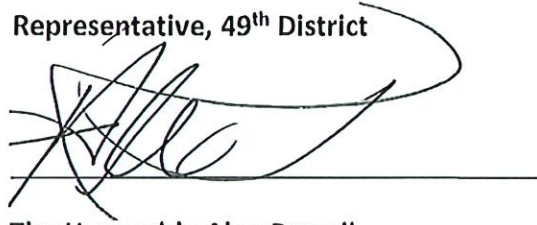
The Honorable Matt Hatchett
Representative, 155th District

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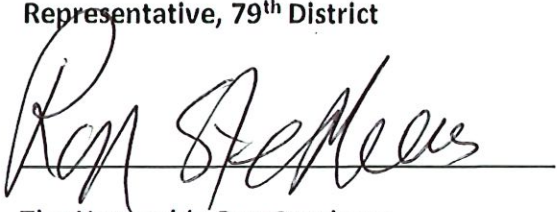
The Honorable Chuck Martin
Representative, 49th District

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The Honorable Yasmin Neal
Representative, 79th District

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The Hon rable Alan Powell
Representative, 33rd District

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The Honorable Ron Stephens
Representative, 164th District