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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 13 May 2026

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 13 mai 2026

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PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS

STOP HARMFUL GAMBLING
ADVERTISING ACT, 2026

LOI DE 2026 VISANT À METTRE FIN
À LA PUBLICITÉ NUISIBLE SUR LE JEU

Ms. Fairclough moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 107, An Act to amend the Gaming Control Act, 1992 / Projet de loi 107, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur la réglementation des jeux.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Pursuant to standing order 100, the member has 12 minutes for their presentation.

Ms. Lee Fairclough: I'm honoured to be here today to speak to Bill 107, my private member's bill, the Stop Harmful Gambling Advertising Act, 2026.

I want to first say thank you to the members from Orléans, Kingston and the Islands, and Ottawa South for co-sponsoring this legislation. I'd also like to welcome some guests that are here in the Legislature today: Dr. Bruce Kidd and Joel Finlay, both previous Olympians; Dr. Steve Joordens; and many others in our team that have been part of pulling this together. They're here to witness this debate. Their leadership, expertise and advocacy on this issue is critical.

The bill would ban online gambling advertising in Ontario, bringing an end to the flood of online gambling advertisements that are supercharging gambling addiction in this province. Bill 107 would amend the Gaming Control Act, 1992, to prohibit anyone who operates an online gaming site or any person acting on such a person's behalf from advertising that site. It carries stiff penalties. Individuals convicted of an offence will be fined up to \$1 million and get their licence revoked if they offend again.

Since this government opened Ontario's doors to private iGaming in 2022, our screens have been hijacked by a relentless cycle of "risk-free bets," "bonus codes" and celebrity endorsements. If you watch a game with your family or if you're in the target market for online sports betting and scroll through your social media feed, the ads are inescapable. Not only are these ads unwelcome and obnoxious, they are designed to keep people playing, losing and coming back. They are designed to be addic-

tive, and they target teenaged boys and young men most, who are, by far, the biggest victims.

According to the Canadian Psychological Association, online gambling ads weaponize psychology to create addiction, much like alcohol, tobacco and cannabis. These products face strict advertising limits for a very good reason.

Ontario stands alone as the only province to allow for-profit iGaming sites. Today, there are 44 private sector, mostly international, gaming companies operating 76 gaming sites. Their relentless marketing has created a growing public health crisis in Ontario and also across the country.

In response, a federal bill introduced by Senator Marty Deacon calls for a national framework to regulate sports betting ads. It's now being considered before the House of Commons with support across all party lines. When I met with Senator Deacon, we talked about how other provinces are paying the price for Ontario's privatization of sports betting. The Senate debate and committee hearings surfaced a critical question: Why should permissive advertising in one province subject the rest of the country to harms caused by these ads?

Provincial governments have the primary responsibility to protect the health of their people. Speaker, we have the full ability as a province to act on this right now. Every member in this Legislature can vote for this change today.

The harms caused by these ads are far-reaching. They damage people's mental and physical health, they destroy people's personal finances and they contribute to the breakdown of families. One in three young adults report that they gamble online, and 25% of them report a high level of gambling-related harms.

A Canadian Medical Association Journal study reports that the rate of adolescent boys and men reaching out to the ConnexOntario helpline for problem gambling skyrocketed by 144% since privatization in 2022. Canadian research shows that people with problem gambling are four times more likely to think about suicide and seven times more likely to have planned a suicide.

In 2024-25, a jaw-dropping \$83 billion was wagered in online gambling in Ontario. Hundreds of millions in profits are flowing out of Ontario and into the coffers of international gambling operators, and this money is coming out of the pockets of young people who can least afford it.

According to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, for every person experiencing gambling problems, another five to ten people are negatively affected. Think of the impact of that: For every single person that's affected, five to ten will be directly affected.

These are shocking numbers, but it's important to put on the record a real-life account of the devastating impact this has had on an Ontario resident. I will read an excerpt from an email of someone's experience that was shared when they saw that I was fighting for this change with this bill: "The access was constant. The advertising was everywhere—on social media, on TV, impossible to ignore. Promotions flooded in: deposit matches, free credits, VIP perks. It felt like opportunity. It was a trap.

"Gambling quickly became an everyday habit ... then an all-day, all-night obsession.

"I stopped sleeping. I stopped eating. I stopped being present in my own life.

"I signed up for every platform that would take me—anywhere offering incentives to keep me playing. The more I lost, the more I chased.

"There were no real safeguards.

"I was able to deposit and lose tens of thousands of dollars in a single day. My credit cards maxed out. Lines of credit drained. No red flags. No intervention.

"The shame consumed me.

"I isolated myself from everyone. I was drowning financially, mentally and physically—and I couldn't stop. I attempted to take my own life more than once. I had completely lost control.

"And with it, I lost everything.

"Online gambling didn't just take my money.

"It took my health.

"It took my peace of mind.

"It took the life I built.

"And I am not alone.

"I am now seeking accountability—from the platforms, from the systems that allowed this level of access, and from the broader structure that made it so easy for someone like me to fall this far, this fast. I want change, and I want stronger safeguards, real intervention and meaningful protections."

I have a message for this brave individual and for everyone who is suffering from gambling addiction: We will change this. We will fight for it. It is wrong for this to continue.

Over 166 studies confirmed that responsible gambling messaging spouted by the industry and this government is ineffective.

CAMH, a hospital renowned for its research in addiction, warns, "To reduce gambling-related harms, the focus must shift from the individual who gambles to the context in which gambling takes place."

Canadians, and Ontarians especially, support restrictions to online gambling. A 2023 Ipsos survey showed that even three years ago, nearly one in two Canadians said online gambling ads are excessive and need to be cut back.

I can tell you, everywhere I've gone in this province, when people have heard that I've introduced a bill, they have said, "Thank you. Please make it happen." Since I introduced my bill to stop advertising for online gambling, my inbox has been overflowing. So many people have called the office, thanking us for taking action. As I visit communities like Thunder Bay, St. Catharines, Almonte,

Ottawa and my own Toronto riding, this bill is resonating everywhere. I've yet to meet anyone who disagrees with this bill, except the gaming industry.

I want to thank the thousands of people who have signed the petition to ban online gambling ads and the many who have spoken up on social media.

It is time to make this change. The data is so compelling.

I've encouraged MPPs on all sides here to protect the people that they serve, to vote with their conscience and support this bill.

As a lifelong athlete, I joined sports community colleagues, like former Olympian Bruce Kidd, in being alarmed at how these ads are also eroding the integrity of sport. One study found that these ads occupy 21% of airtime for NHL and NBA broadcasts in Ontario. They found 3,537 gambling logos or references in only seven games. My son and I were tallying for a while as we watched the Raptors versus the Cavaliers in the playoffs. It was just constant.

We're also seeing a disturbing increase in competition manipulation and of athletes abused by disgruntled bettors.

As the mom of two teenage boys, I see first-hand how young males are systematically targeted by these ads. The Canadian Paediatric Society reports that underage gambling is common and starts as young as 9 or 10 years of age. This is a chilling fact for any parent.

The only ones benefiting from Ontario's policy are iGaming companies. They increased their revenue by 31% to \$9.59 billion in 2025 and are taking in hundreds of millions in profits each year.

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Ford's Conservatives and the industry will tell you that they have rules. They'll show you the "play responsibly" disclaimer at the bottom of the screen in a font so small you'd need a microscope to read it. All the evidence shows that warnings to game responsibly are ineffective. The industry was able to easily sidestep the alcohol and gaming commission's ban on celebrity endorsements.

This government and industry will also argue that online gambling revenues support social programs in Ontario. This is false economy. It fails to account for the ever-rising public cost of preventable harms caused by unfettered advertising.

This is basic prevention. As a society, we know that advertising addictive products fuels addiction. We already learned the hard lessons of tobacco marketing. That's why, when we legalized cannabis, we restricted advertising from the get-go. We understand that companies can't be trusted to police themselves, and the industry's job is to get as many people as possible—and as young as possible—to use products.

It is time for the government to do its job. Every legislator in this House can support this. The evidence is clear. The public views are clear. The World Health Organization, the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Psychological Association, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health all recommend significant guardrails for online gambling advertising. I trust these experts.

This bill should never be a partisan matter. Right now, we can put an end to online gambling advertising in Ontario. I call on all members of the Legislature to please put people and their health first and vote in support.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I want to applaud the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore for bringing this forward. I think all of us in this House watch sports—some of us maybe more than others. Every now and again, there are good games on. But we see the flood of online gaming, and as a mother of a teenage boy, I'm worried about how these ads will be used to harm him. And we do know that from cigarettes. We know this from public health research. It's obvious that when things are addictive, we have to do everything we can to make sure they're safe and that we prevent further harm.

The stat that I read in the recent article is that for young men, calls to ConnexOntario are up 317%.

I do want to give a shout-out to Marty Deacon as well. She is a senator from my region, and I applaud her efforts to curb the harms that are happening to young people.

I really worry about gambling addictions. I mean, friends of mine who have sons that are in their twenties talk about how all the boys have their cellphones in their pockets, and they're buzzing and they're beeping. So even if you're not watching sports, the way in which they pursue you in your pocket—it's touching your skin. The vibration of a phone is so aggressive.

It's staggering how these companies lack accountability for the harm that's happening. They create algorithms, just like social media, and now these companies are going to court. This is the legacy that is happening from doing the legalization of online gambling in a way that's harmful without setting up the parameters and protections in place. Because as a former social worker, those specialized supports for gambling addiction are rare in most of our cities. Perhaps in Toronto with CAMH and some jurisdictions with high urban populations, there are specialized supports. But I guarantee that in our communities, small and medium, they do not exist, and our social workers are not trained and prepared for this. We don't have the labour pipeline to deal with this, so we should be preventing harm.

We know that the cost of prevention is far less in terms of humanity and taxpayer dollars than if we just treat the mess afterwards. Think of this person that you mentioned who has spent all this money. His life is forever changed. It will take decades for him to restore his life to his full potential and thrive the way we want him to, where we could have avoided that.

We know the financial cost. We know the cost to families. I've spoken to parents whose kids were impacted by this, and they're devastated. Their lives are lost. Their lives have changed forever because of the issues that their child faces. And we know that parents—I've worked with families whose fathers have committed suicide because they're so ashamed of having lost everything, and that

source of pride, of being the financial provider, that they could never recover is lost.

I know right now we see a major spike in ADHD, and those young people are most at risk for addiction, especially the way we've gamified this and made it seem like a Candy Crush game.

Right now we don't have youth rehab. We've closed two of the four youth rehabs. The young people in my riding who need addiction services go to New Brunswick to get rehab—and that's if our province will pay the bill. Sometimes they can't afford it, or they spend \$20,000 of their family money to do that. These are our kids.

So I applaud you for bringing forward a motion that really tries to set some guardrails in place so they can move through the world and not have this kind of harm done. This is a systems issue. We know that from all the evidence and from the issues related to cigarettes that this is a systems issue, and we need to change the system to make sure it doesn't cause harm. I think we can have a future, an Ontario, where kids are less at risk for gambling.

You, know, back in the day—I know, I said that. I'm old enough now. I've got a silver lining. I'm 47. Back in the day, you had to drive to a city 100 kilometres away, park your car and walk into a building, and if you had a problem, they would stop you. But now it's in your pocket. You don't have to go anywhere. So when you're at your worst, at 3 o'clock in the morning—that's usually when people hit their mood the hardest—that phone is right there for you to distract yourself from the hopelessness you feel and to just gamble on the fact that maybe you'll have that big win, because that's what the advertisements show. They show happy people who win a lot of money, and their worries go away. So as 50% of Canadians are living paycheque to paycheque, and we know that unemployment is an all-time high, people are looking for an out to this affordability crisis, and they're looking in the wrong place because they're being sold lies.

I shouldn't have to know what a parlay is. I'm an old lady who barely watches sports; I shouldn't know what a parlay is. But let's do better and let's keep these words out of our—

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

MPP Robin Lennox: It's an honour to rise on behalf of the people of Hamilton Centre. I'd like to start by congratulating the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore on her first private member's bill ballot date. Thank you for bringing forward this important issue for discussion today.

We know that online gambling has become a significant issue and a public health concern here in Ontario. We know that since online gambling was privatized in 2022, there's been a tremendous increase in the prevalence of online gaming among Ontarians, with a 240% increase in active player accounts just between 2022 and 2025. While only one in 46 Ontarians engaged in online gaming in 2022, that number has now climbed to one in 13 people.

One of the main reasons we've seen this extraordinary growth is because the Ontario government chose to open up online gambling to the private for-profit companies

who are exposing Ontarians to aggressive, relentless and targeted advertising aimed at exploiting them in order to maximize corporate profits.

And just yesterday—I can share the example of how I was just streaming music, trying to do work and listening to music, and every few minutes I was interrupted by Jon Hamm telling me to use BetMGM’s online gaming platforms. We see it absolutely everywhere now: iGaming advertisements during sporting events, on social media apps and on TV, and our children are seeing it. Particularly young people in their twenties and thirties are very susceptible to iGaming ads that are increasingly normalized and paired with typically healthy activities like watching a sporting event.

Ontarians now have near-constant access to gambling through their phones, and gambling has become deeply intertwined with sports culture and digital media. As advertising expands, those harms become less visible, particularly among those who are most vulnerable. The lack of comprehensive provincial and federal systems to track gambling-related harms has further obscured the full extent of the problem.

But gambling is far from a benign experience. Gambling-use disorder, otherwise known as obsessive gambling or gambling addiction, is a serious mental health condition impacting many Ontarians today. In one Canadian survey, nearly 73% of Canadians had engaged in gambling in their lifetime, and nearly one in 10 of those reported symptoms concerning for gambling-use disorder.

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In Ontario, referrals to ConnexOntario for gambling-use disorder have sharply increased since the emergence of playOLG, and then again sharply increased after the Conservative government ushered in privatization of online gambling. Compared with no private online gambling, gambling-related contacts in adolescent boys and men aged 15 to 24 are estimated to have increased by as much as 144%.

The consequences of gambling-use disorder are severe. They can include financial distress, breakdown of family structures and relationships, and they’re associated with high rates of anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation. Young men aged 15 to 34 are disproportionately represented among those experiencing gambling-use disorder in Ontario. They are also the target audience for most iGaming advertisements.

The unscrupulous pairing of aggressive iGaming advertising and within-game sports betting has made things even worse because fans can be deceived that their knowledge of the sport might actually increase their chances of winning. But as the old adage goes, the house always wins, and thanks to this Conservative government, private online gambling companies are winning big.

Ontarians placed almost \$9.6 billion in wagers on licensed online casinos and sports books in March of this year alone, an all-time monthly record for Ontario iGaming. At a time when so many Ontarians are struggling to make ends meet and may be desperate enough to try to use these

apps to make a little bit of extra money to get by, this is a very concerning trend.

You would think that after everything we learned from the tobacco industry and the harms of aggressive public advertising, we wouldn’t be making that same mistake again with online gambling. Similarly to tobacco, we know that aggressive advertising targeting youth increases the chances of someone starting to gamble or gambling more frequently.

But we also learned that when we banned harmful tobacco advertising, those rates dropped. We saw a 37% reduction in beginning to smoke and even higher rates of smoking cessation. We need to learn from this example and act now to ban online gambling advertising before it causes further harm to the people of Ontario.

On the topic of learning from our history, this is not the first time that a call to ban gambling advertising has come from within this House. In 2023, this House had the opportunity to pass legislation introduced by Ontario NDP caucus members from Nickel Belt, Windsor West and Humber River–Black Creek when they tabled Bill 126, An Act to prohibit advertising for online gambling sites. The Conservatives chose not to act on that opportunity, but I hope they make a better choice today with this legislation.

I hope we can also take this one step further by implementing safeguards to protect Ontarians from harmful gambling practices. That means ensuring that online gambling reflects the low-risk gambling guidelines developed by the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction. These include restricting gambling to fewer than four days per month and discouraging Ontarians from gambling more than 1% of their monthly income.

As MPPs, we have the responsibility to protect the public from exploitative and harmful practices and to take a stand against corporate profiteering when it comes at the expense of those we are elected to serve. That’s why I’m glad to support this bill and to support ongoing work to end harmful gambling advertising in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

Mr. Ted Hsu: I believe that online gambling is a ticking time bomb in our society. Online gambling reminds me of 15 years ago, when I was an MP. We were told that opioid addiction was going to become a much bigger problem, and we’ve seen how that turned out. Let’s not repeat that disaster.

How big is online gambling in Ontario? Well, the TSX Venture Exchange companies raised \$10 billion in 2025—actually a pretty good year. This is the future of Ontario’s economic growth. iGaming Ontario—just online gambling in Ontario—had wagers in just one month, March 2026, of about \$10 billion, the same size as a whole year of capital raised on the TSX Venture Exchange. That comparison is amazing, given that the ability to raise risk capital is a significant drag on Ontario’s early-stage ventures.

Online gambling is becoming a public health crisis with real harms and real costs: addiction, worsening mental health, financial distress and family breakdowns.

The Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction said that increased advertising is normalizing gambling. The Canadian Psychological Association has warned that gambling marketing contributes to addiction and should be restricted. Adolescent boys and young men are those most affected.

ConnexOntario offers free confidential information on services for those facing issues with gambling. And since the Ford Conservative government privatized online gambling in 2022, calls to ConnexOntario have increased by 144%, with most gambling-related contacts linked to online platforms.

There's a difference between a fun bet and a destructive addiction. Advertising for online betting is not needed to have fun, and it doesn't protect the well-being of Ontarians. I call on all MPPs to support this initiative of MPP Lee Fairclough.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

MPP Billy Denault: Good evening, Speaker. I just first want to say thank you to the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for sharing the reasonings behind her bill, and I certainly mean that genuinely. As parliamentarians, we come to this House to discuss and debate issues of great importance to our communities, and I know all too well the issues surrounding responsible gaming.

As a part of that, we get to have valued debate over issues that matter deeply to the people of the province of Ontario. And we may not always agree on the tack or the roads that we go down, but I think we can all agree on a desire to make Ontario better, to make Ontarians' lives better, and to do what is always necessary to protect those who need supports when they need it most.

As one of the youngest members of caucus and a young male who has many friends who fall into that category that the member references, I certainly understand this issue in the context of today. And as a member of this new generation, I think it's important for us to recognize that we live in, truly, an age of a connected world. With the proliferation of the Internet, it's made an environment where the use of online avenues for various activities, including gaming, are just at one's fingertips. That's precisely why our government took the necessary actions to protect Ontarians.

This evening, I just want to differentiate between what are two competing approaches: one put forward this evening by the member, which is a blanket advertisement prohibition, which has historically not been met successfully, particularly in today's Internet environment and an approach that, as I will be showing this evening, is a step backwards and not a step forwards, and one that has far-reaching consequences beyond iGaming operators, to sponsorships, to festivals, sports teams and fundraisers; and then I want to share our approach, which has been rooted in pragmatic, data-driven measures and supports being available to those that need them when they need it most.

And this evening, I want to take us down the entirety of this issue. I want to start by going through the history of

this issue because it's important as a part of dissecting where we are, how we got here, what we are doing, and where we are going as it relates to gaming and online gaming in the province of Ontario.

I want to go back to the unregulated online gaming market in Ontario prior to the establishment of this regulatory framework. One would not be mistaken in describing Ontario's online gaming environment as truly the Wild West. And again, taking a look back at this issue prior to the establishment of iGaming Ontario, we saw an availability of those to utilize a market that was unregulated, that did not have protections or opportunities to protect those who are vulnerable to online gaming.

But in 2022, our government took action to regulate the industry. We established iGaming Ontario, putting on notice online operators that the time for a sector without oversight was over. In doing so, we have captured existing unregulated marketing activity, which limited responsible gaming and consumer protection features.

Since doing so, the government of Ontario has set out to protect players with clear standards, safeguards to participants and access to the right supports when people need them most. For example, all registered iGaming operators are required to meet all responsible gaming requirements set out by iGaming Ontario, including obtaining an RG Check accreditation from the Responsible Gambling Council.

By regulating the industry in the manner we have, we have put the online gaming industry into stringent regulatory frameworks under the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario. And through the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario, we established responsible gaming standards for all gaming aspects, including for casinos, charitable gaming halls and the regulated online market, covering areas like advertising, product design, player support and setting gambling limits.

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We do these safeguards and actions, and they show up in very real ways:

- through the enforcement of strict regulations for operators, including age and identity verification, limits on advertising, and tools like voluntary self-exclusion programs;

- through OLG's award-winning PlaySmart program, which promotes player health and safe play;

- iGaming Ontario's requirement that all gaming operators maintain accreditation through the Responsible Gambling Council's RG Check; and

- lastly, requiring all private operators to contribute a percentage of their annual gross gambling revenue to responsible gaming campaigns.

In addition to the strong regulatory framework present in the current regulatory regime, I want to reiterate our actions made to date that have strengthened regulations as they relate to advertising through online gaming. In February 2024, the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario made changes to the registrar's standards for iGaming to restrict the use of celebrities and/or athletes for promotional or marketing activities, except when advocating for responsible gaming practices. This was one of the

many pragmatic data-driven measures our government took to strengthen regulations as they relate to online gaming and advertising to protect Ontarians.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention supports that have been made possible by a government that cares, a government that provides supports to those who need it most when they need it most. It's important to highlight that since 2018, the government of Ontario has funded over \$474 million for responsible gaming supports—which includes the government and operators—funding of which is mandated through government initiatives. Ontario provides approximately \$36 million in funding for programs and services focused on problem-gambling education and outreach, as well as problem-gambling addiction and treatment supports. This funding is delivered through the Ministry of Health's problem-gambling prevention and problem-gambling treatment services programs. This funding also supports the Responsible Gambling Council in providing responsible gaming consumer education campaigns and community outreach programs, as well as the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's problem-gambling-related supports.

In 2025-26, the government and iGaming operators funded over \$84 million for responsible gaming supports, with iGO operators investing a total of \$23 million in responsible gaming campaigns in 2024 and 2025. In that same time frame, OLG invested a total of \$34 million into their responsible gaming program. It's indicative of a government that is not just using words but taking action and putting supports in place to help those who need it when they need it most.

I want to end by appreciating the member and what they are doing bringing this issue forward. I think we can all recognize the sensitivity of this issue and the importance of it. I want to assure the member of this: that our government continues to work with the sector and regulators to find ways to continue to build on the regulatory framework that is one of the strongest responsible gaming frameworks in the world.

If there's one thing that the people of Ontario should take from this debate, it is that while we may not support this bill—and we do so because it is a prohibition and it would be a step backwards towards the Wild West of an unregulated online gambling market that we took decisive action to move away from—you can rest assured that we will, as a government, continue to pursue and find pragmatic, data-driven approaches and supports that ensure those who need the support, those who need the care and those who deserve the compassion that we all have for those suffering can get it when they need it most. I want to add that our ministry is actively working with the Ministry of the Attorney General to explore all options as it relates to this issue.

On that note, I will end my debate. I thank again the member for bringing this issue forward to the chamber, and I look forward to future discussions on this issue in the future.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: As the official opposition critic of gaming, I am acutely aware of the devastating impacts gaming can have on the lives of individuals and families in Ontario. So it is really distressing, but not surprising, to hear that the government won't be supporting this bill. I mean, quite clearly they don't care about the financial losses, families being torn apart, psychological traumas and even, as we heard, suicidal ideation.

I have raised these very disturbing concerns to this government many times. We know that since the Ford government privatized online gambling in 2022, there's been a dramatic increase in gaming and related harm in our province. This is especially true for young men because, as we can all see, gambling is now deeply entwined with professional sports.

At finance committee, I asked the minister why we cannot watch a Leafs game or a Raptors game without being lured to gamble. Sports coverage, the commentators and media broadcasting are constantly speculating about the matchups and the changing odds.

Shockingly, this type of insidious coercion is not considered a gaming advertisement and therefore does not fall under the advertising regulations that this member just talked about.

At the time, the minister of gaming agreed with me that this is a problem, but we still have seen nothing done about it. All you have to do is tap an app and you can spend next week's paycheque.

Even if you're in recovery and doing your best not to relapse, there are plenty of unregulated triggers online, in the media, at the corner store, even at the drugstore.

Here are just two of the many letters I've received from people in my community sharing their personal experiences with gambling addiction: "It's not just about the money—it's about the time it takes away from loved ones. I've lost so much to this addiction, including relationships and opportunities. Everything I worked so hard for my life savings gone in the push of a button."

And, "Our son is a compulsive gambler ... an illness from which he will never recover. He has lost all his savings, is in debt to loan companies and has amassed huge bank charges. He would be homeless and hungry without our support. It is not a situation we want to see any other parent experience."

In my riding, just a block from my constituency office in Dundas, is an organization called Routes that provides essential programs to youth, including one of their programs which is responsible gaming and gambling. They're seeing problem gambling as early as high school, and I just heard here in this House as early as nine and ten. It's shocking.

Unfortunately, this centre doesn't receive proper funding, and they will have to close their doors as early as March 2027. There's an important gaming prevention program that will be lost to youth in my community.

So yes, absolutely, we need to have strict, strict regulations for gaming, but that is not enough. This government is complicit. They are earning hundreds of millions in revenue from gambling, and these gaming companies are

earning obscene profits—profits that are ill-gotten gains on the backs of the youth in our province.

We need to regulate these companies to stop preying on our young people, and, absolutely, we need to pass this bill. It's important for us to protect the youth and the people of the province of Ontario. That's this government's job. What are you doing?

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: It's an honour to rise in the chamber on behalf of the residents of Don Valley West in support of private member's Bill 107, the Stop Harmful Gambling Advertising Act, tabled by my colleague the great member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

This bill would address a growing, pervasive issue that has been flooding our television screens, laptops, phones and disrupting the lives of many, in particular, young men. I've heard from some of those young men, Speaker, and I'll come back to that.

This bill would prohibit a person who operates an electronic gaming site—like we do with many other sins, as we call them, that we all like to indulge in from time to time—from advertising or otherwise promoting the site or anything that is offered or made available on the site. It implements a two-strike rule, where the first instance of failing to comply results in a fine and the second will cause their registration to be revoked.

I have received many emails and phone calls from constituents saying enough is enough. One constituent wrote, "Every time I'm watching the Jays game, between every baseball pitch, an ad will pop up for some online casino or sports betting platform." These ads are flooding the channels almost as much as the government's "Protect Ontario" advertising.

It's no surprise, then, that gambling addiction rates have soared, especially among young men. Since online gambling was privatized in 2022, ConnexOntario, the mental health helpline, has seen an increase of over 144% in calls from young men aged 15 to 24 reaching out for help with gambling addictions.

This mess was created by the harmful Ford Conservative government, and I'm proud of the work that my colleague the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore has done to give us all the opportunity to fix it.

1840

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I am really proud of the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for bringing this bill forward.

You will remember, Speaker, that in 2023, I brought a very similar bill forward: the Ban iGaming Advertising Act. The government responded pretty much the same. I'm going to have to check Hansard, but I think, word for word, what we just heard from the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is very close: that iGaming in 2022 had oversight—which was not adequate. But the push that came from the community was substantive, and the government actually acted—a little, wee step in the right direction. They banned, in February 2024—so a few months

after—celebrities and athletes doing advertising for iGaming. Is it the end? No. It's a step in the right direction.

So don't get discouraged. What you've heard from the members of the Conservatives—they know that what is going on is wrong. They know that the advertising, which makes up 25% of television—if you're watching the Stanley Cup right now—is for promoting iGaming, and they target children.

If we as legislators cannot realize that we have a responsibility to protect the children of Ontario, I don't know who can. All of this advertising is wrong. We don't advertise tobacco because it's addictive. We don't advertise cannabis because it's addictive. We don't advertise alcohol because it's addictive. But we advertise gaming non-stop. It's addictive, and lives get ruined because of it, so that some gaming machine can make billions of dollars in profit.

We have a responsibility to protect the people of Ontario, and this bill allows us to do that.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

Mr. Stephen Blais: It's a pleasure to rise today, on behalf of the residents of Orléans, in strong support of Bill 107, the Stop Harmful Gambling Advertising Act, introduced by my friend and colleague the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Lee Fairclough.

Thank you, Lee, for bringing this forward. It's an important piece of legislation, and I'm very proud to co-sponsor it.

Madam Speaker, online gambling advertising has exploded over the last few years, and it is now impossible to avoid. Whether you're watching television, scrolling on your phone, listening to a podcast or walking to the bus stop, gambling ads are everywhere.

But nowhere is the impact more evident than in sports. You used to watch a game and hear the analysis about the players, about the strategy, about the matchup. But now, every intermission and every sports panel revolves around betting odds, point spreads and gambling apps. Even the sports highlights, the sports news, comes with a pitch for gambling.

Imagine if the CTV news at 6 was advertising the Polymarket spread, that the Premier won't be around by the next election—currently at 20%—or imagine if the Global News reporting talked about the odds that the Premier would sell his luxury private jet within three days of it becoming public. Imagine if that was part of the news every night. That would be a problem for democracy.

This is a problem for our kids. And because it's built directly into sports coverage, young people are being exposed to it constantly—particularly young boys and men. Betting language has become normalized for children and young teens watching sports on their own and with their parents.

Madam Speaker, as a society, we have placed reasonable limits on advertising for alcohol, tobacco and cannabis because we know that these products cause harm, especially for young people.

In fact, it was principled Progressive Conservatives, under Brian Mulroney, who banned tobacco advertising,

and they had absolutely no problem with what it might do to the marketplace. They knew it was bad. They knew it was bad for kids. So they banned it. Progressive Conservatives used to have principles about protecting people, especially our kids.

So it's fair to ask why gambling is being treated differently, because it's just as addictive and, frankly, it has far fewer protections.

In one study, 73.1% of Canadians reported participating in some form of gambling between October 2024 and January 2025—a three-month spread—and one in 10 showed signs of gambling problems.

As had been mentioned earlier tonight, another study found that since the Conservative government privatized online gambling in 2022, the rate of young men contacting Ontario's mental health and addictions helpline increased by 144%.

This should concern every member of the Legislature, especially the parents and especially the parents of boys and young men, because behind these numbers are real people struggling with real addiction, overwhelming debt, mental health challenges and, in some cases, suicide ideation.

Bill 107 recognizes that gambling advertising is a serious public health issue. It draws an important line that says we should not allow gambling companies to dominate public spaces and entertainment platforms without stricter restrictions.

Sports are supposed to be about bringing people together. Sports are all about competition, teamwork and community. They should not be about making a bet.

I hope that the members of the Legislature, especially the members in the government, will reconsider their position, join us in supporting this excellent legislation and ensure we protect our kids.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

MPP Tyler Watt: I want to first begin by congratulating my fabulous colleague on your first tabled private member's bill. This is such an important one.

The moment I started talking about this in my riding of Nepean—we put it in a newsletter—we got inundated with emails, with parents and young people and young men supporting it. Young men were sharing their stories of their friends who have become completely addicted because of this—this thing that sits in their pocket all day long. You used to have to go to a casino, but now you can just spend all day on here. It is like a drug, and the way that they pull you in is with those flashy ads.

I don't have cable. I don't really watch TV. I do everything online now. The ads are incessant on YouTube, TikTok—you name it.

And this is targeted towards young people and kids. It pulls you in with a free 50 coins or whatever, and then you hit that jackpot and you get that dopamine hit, just like a drug, and it keeps on doing this over and over again. This is a mental health issue. This is an addictions issue. This is an issue that everyone is facing, especially young people. It is designed to make you addicted.

I urge this government to remind yourselves that you ran on protecting Ontario, so now is your chance to do so.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

Mr. John Fraser: I'm pleased to stand in support of my colleague from Etobicoke–Lakeshore and Bill 107, and thank her for allowing me to join others in co-signing on the bill with her.

I once said in a caucus meeting, when we were talking about online gambling, well before most of you were here, "If we could sell heroin, would we?" It was a shocking thing to say, but I said it because gambling addictions are pernicious. They're pernicious like eating disorders. They hook into you, and they don't let you go until they take everything away from you—everything.

I used to run grocery stores, and we had break-open tickets. I would watch a mom go through a box of Nevada tickets and gamble the grocery money away with a child in the shopping cart. I'll never forget it. I haven't forgotten it.

Gambling addictions are pernicious.

I want to tell you an anecdotal story. It's not a scientific study, but I did it in my office about three or four years ago. I had four young men between 25 and 30, and I was talking about it at the time. I said, "How many of you like sports betting?" All four of them sports bet. They all said, "Yes, I do." I said, "How many of do you it every week?", and three of them said, "Yes, I do it every week. I bet on something." And then I said, "How many of you do it every day?" There was one young man who said, "I get up every morning and I do a parlay every morning." He was getting married. I was worried about him. I was worried about him like I worry about my son.

This isn't about a prohibition; this is about preventing harm. This is not allowing a pernicious disease—because that's what it is, a pernicious disease—to spread and get its hooks into young men, young women, people who are just starting the beginning of their lives.

1850

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

Hon. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to join in the debate on Bill 107. I want to thank the member opposite for this bill. I think most people in the House know that she's a leadership candidate for the Liberal Party. I think we can all agree she's the caucus choice for the leadership. We hear she gets a lot of support from caucus. I do hope she—because you run in the leadership, you get roped into some other comments. So I hope she does take a stand on that Scarborough Southwest nomination. I sent her a little note from Nate this morning, so I would love to talk to her about it offline.

But I do want to speak specifically to this bill, and I thank her for putting it on the order paper. I think the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke certainly is the right demographic for this conversation, and he did make a lot of points about what the government has done.

I remember very vividly, Speaker, when the Liberal government did the enabling legislation to allow online gambling. It was a very spirited debate in the House on

both sides. I remember Peter Kormos, actually, making a speech that day about, “How are we going to regulate that guy in his underwear, in his basement, drinking a glass of whisky in front of his home computer? How are we going to stop him from gambling away the family fortune?”

I just want to make sure that people understand, because I have a land-based casino in my riding, and the same debate we’re having here today in some form happened between Gananoque, which ended up with the land-based casino, and Brockville, which decided they didn’t want the casino. So a lot of the same gambling conversations took place in this chamber, that budget, when the Liberal government did what they did.

But it happens in communities all across the province. I know people that have had this challenge, whether it be when Pro Line first started to come out, whether it’s online gaming now, football pools, hockey. It happens in all corners, all income levels—on all levels.

I do want to thank the member for Nickel Belt, who talked about the decision by the alcohol and gaming commission in February of 2024, when they made the change to restrict celebrities and athletes for promotional and marketing activities.

I do think that when we come to this place—I’ve certainly realized in my 16 years there are a lot of different ways to fix a problem. Legislation—this bill—is one way to fix it, but there are other ways. What happened in February of 2024 with the AGCO making those changes to the registrar standards for iGaming—I think that same thing could take place. There are a number of things that could take place to fix this without legislation. That’s the one thing I have learned since I have come here: that legislation isn’t always the opportunity to fix things.

Interjections.

Mr. Steve Clark: I know the members opposite can yell at me, but I can respectfully disagree. I think the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke talked about some of those bumpers that we put in the system, whether it be through alcohol and gaming or whether through the Responsible Gambling Council. I think there are things we can do without passing this bill.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

The member now has two minutes to reply.

Ms. Lee Fairclough: I want to say thank you again to all my colleagues in this Legislature who have spoken to

this bill today. I have appreciated the thoughtfulness of everybody’s remarks, and I know that the people across this province appreciate that we are having the discussion—people who are here in the galleries who have advocated for this issue as well.

I want to just reflect on a few of the big points that were made. I think that many colleagues reiterated some of the data that is pointing to the fact that we need to do something. My colleague the MPP for Kitchener also mentioned that we also don’t have service everywhere in the province for people that need it.

We’ve heard that there have been attempts and changes to try to do something about it. But I cannot help but draw the parallel to where we were on tobacco, as somebody who worked in cancer care and cancer control for years. We learned we can prevent something—we can actually prevent something—and the advertising is part of it. This is actually our chance.

We find ourselves here today in 2026. We have the compelling reasons for why we should do this, and I believe that it is the government’s job to make sure that we are not causing public harm. That is a principle that guides government’s decisions. The evidence is in, and we can draw a straight line from when the private sector was allowed to participate in this gambling market and the increase in the number of people experiencing that harm.

We will move to a vote today and tomorrow, and I hope that we all will consider doing the right thing. We need to ban advertising for online gambling, and we will continue to fight to be sure that we do.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): The time provided for private members’ public business has expired.

Ms. Fairclough has moved second reading of Bill 107, An Act to amend the Gaming Control Act, 1992. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until the next instance of deferred votes.

Second reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): All matters related to private members’ public business having been completed, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, May 14, at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1857.

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Clancy, Aislinn (GRN)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
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Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
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Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce

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Firin, Mohamed (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
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Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Leader, Third Party / Chef du troisième parti
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gilmour, Alexa (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Gualtieri, Silvia (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
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Hazell, Andrea (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et de l'Agroentreprise
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
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Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon. Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
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Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Energy and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie et des Mines
Lennox, Robin (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Sport / Ministre du Sport
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
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McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York	

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Oosterhoff, Hon. / L'hon. Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries / Ministre associé des Industries à forte consommation d'énergie
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	Deputy House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
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Pinsonneault, Steve (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
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Racinsky, Joseph (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation / Ministre des Affaires autochtones et de la Réconciliation économique avec les Premières Nations Minister Responsible for Ring of Fire Economic and Community Partnerships / Ministre responsable des Partenariats économiques et communautaires pour le développement du Cercle de feu
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Rosenberg, Bill (PC)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Chris (IND)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Skelly, Hon. / L'hon. Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Speaker / Présidente de l'Assemblée législative
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre associé des Affaires municipales et du Logement
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Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business / Ministre associée des Petites Entreprises
Thanigasalam, Hon. / L'hon. Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué à la Santé mentale et à la Lutte contre les dépendances
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Attorney General / Procureur général associé
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	Deputy Speaker / Vice-Présidente Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Tsao, Jonathan (LIB)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Vickers, Paul (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
Watt, Tyler (LIB)	Nepean	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Vacant	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough- Sud-Ouest	