



**HOUSE BILL 1444**  
**HOUSE AGRICULTURAL COMMITTEE**  
**JANUARY 28, 2021**

**TESTIMONY OF CYNTHIA C. MONTEAU, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Cynthia Monteau, I am the Executive Director of the United Tribes Gaming Association (UTGA). I come before you today as an Opponent of House Bill 1444, a bill that expands gaming through historic horse racing wagering, in addition to, authorizing the Racing Commission to self-regulate.

The five tribal nations established UTGA to promote, protect, and advocate for Indian gaming. Gaming in the state began after Congress passed the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act or IGRA, in 1988. IGRA was established to regulate gaming on tribal land. It brought integrity to gaming and opportunities for tribal nations. We built casinos to create jobs, establish an economy and promote economic development in our communities. In essence, it was our opportunity to provide for ourselves through programs and services beneficial to our people. In establishing our business operations we hired outside of our tribes, from management to slot attendants. We currently employ over 3,000 full-time equivalents (FTEs). By creating jobs in our communities we dramatically impacted unemployment rates as our casinos are often among the top employers in our communities and communities surrounding our reservations.

Tribal casino operations generate over \$300 million to the state economy as we hire outside vendors and services in our operations.



We have a direct economic impact to the local markets. The state also receives the benefits of personal income taxes and business taxes that are not realized by our operations. Furthermore, our casinos generously donate about \$500,000 annually to local charities, non-profits, rodeo clubs and the like. We have contributed \$125,000 annually to Lutheran Social Services in response to gambling addiction.

Supporting tribal gaming exclusive to tribes is a win-win for both the tribal nations and the state, any impact to our revenue results in a loss of jobs, loss of business to local vendors who in many cases rely heavily on our operations, and an increase in unemployment costs to the state and other financial assistance programs.

Gaming is in most cases our sole source of revenue, that creates jobs and economic development. HB1444 is an expansion of gaming – which we are adamantly opposed.

We urge a do NOT pass of HB 1444.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.