



**Testimony of Brian Hess
Executive Director
Sports Fans Coalition**

Chairman Guzzone and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this afternoon about S. 4, which would legalize sports betting in Maryland.

My name is Brian Hess, Executive Director of Sports Fans Coalition, a nationwide non-profit advocacy organization devoted to representing fans wherever public policy impacts the games we love. We are best known for leading the campaign to end the Federal Communications Commission's sports blackout rule, which we accomplished in 2014 despite massive opposition from the NFL and broadcast industry. We've also been on the front lines fighting massive media consolidations, the NFL's concussion cover-up, corruption within the United States Soccer Federation and their inequitable treatment of women and youth, and ticket fraud. We advocate on behalf of sports fans in all of these areas and more in Washington, DC, and state capitals around the country.

In the aftermath of the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act repeal, Sports Fans Coalition convened a symposium to discuss what consumer protections should look like with sports betting. We heard from academics, consumer protection advocates, including Attorney General Frosh, and other experts, to debate what consumer protections should accompany sports betting legislation. Out of this symposium, SFC published a white paper and the Sports Bettors' Bill of Rights. These rights are:

1. The Right to Integrity and Transparency
2. Data Privacy and Security
3. Self-Exclusion
4. Protection of the Vulnerable
5. Recourse

A legalized sports betting market has the potential to raise millions of dollars for Maryland, which can support education initiatives or other spending priorities. However, that will only materialize if you offer your sports bettors something the current black market cannot – consumer protections. These protections are the only incentive a bettor has to leave the black market and pay taxes on their winnings.



The Bill of Rights creates protections that guarantee timely payouts, ensure that a bettor's personally identifiable information is secure and not shared or sold to third parties, empowers consumers to regulate themselves, helps Maryland's at-risk bettors to access gambling addiction resources, and helps bettors advocate for themselves and seek recourse if they have been wronged.

Maryland should not fall behind its neighbors in the "DMV" area when it comes to protecting its citizens. The Sports Bettors' Bill of Rights recently passed in Washington, D.C. Virginia lawmakers are considering adopting the Bill of Rights this session and it looks like they will follow the lead of Washington, D.C. in adopting them.

Maryland has the opportunity to work in tandem with the rest of the DMV to create the safest sports betting market in the country and lead the nation in consumer protections, while increasing revenues by encouraging bettors to leave the black market. I urge the full adoption of the Sports Bettors' Bill of Rights in SB 4.

Thank you, and I am happy to answer any questions.