

Testimony – Favorable  
HB1192 – Video Lottery Employee Licenses – Crimes of Moral Turpitude – Alterations  
Testimony to the Maryland Senate Taxation and Budget Committee  
For Hearing held on Tuesday, March 26, 2024  
Submitted by  
Michael Hachey, UNITE HERE

Thank you to Delegate Feldmark for sponsoring this Bill and also to all the cosponsors. My name is Michael Hachey, and I am here today representing UNITE HERE Local 7 and Local 25. Our union represents workers at the Horseshoe Casino, MGM National Harbor, and Ocean Downs Casino. We strongly support this bill to expand access to casino jobs.

Through organizing and collective bargaining, casino workers have achieved high standards of wages and benefits. These good, union jobs should be accessible to all members of our communities throughout Maryland. Unfortunately, current casino license requirements are a barrier blocking many from accessing these jobs.

Our union created a hospitality training academy with support from the Baltimore Mayor's Office of Employment Development to provide job training and placement services. Participants in our program include returning citizens re-entering the workforce.

In the past year, three graduates of our culinary training program applied for jobs at the Horseshoe Casino. They completed a three-week class with a culinary skills curriculum developed in partnership with unionized employers. However, they were denied jobs due to licensing, highlighting the urgent need for this legislation.

Most of our members work in non-gaming positions within the casinos such as food and beverage and cleaning positions. Even though these jobs do not directly involve gambling, the positions still require a license. We filed a Public Information Act Request with the Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency about denials for these non-gaming positions only. From January 2022 through December 11, 2023, there were 244 denials for non-gaming positions. 85 of those denials were applicants from Baltimore City, which was the largest group.

Beyond the applicants who have been denied, we are also concerned that many more have been deterred from even applying because of the unclear and opaque requirements to receive a license.

We hope to see this bill become law and we hope to continue working together to equitably expand access to casino jobs.

UNITE HERE asks for a favorable reading by the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee.