



Ocean City, Maryland Chamber of Commerce

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TESTIMONY OFFERED ON BEHALF OF **THE GREATER OCEAN CITY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

IN OPPOSITION OF:

SB0565 – Expansion of Commercial Gaming - Internet Gaming Referendum

Before:

Budget and Taxation Committee

Hearing: 2/28/24 at 1:00 PM

The Greater Ocean City Chamber of Commerce, representing over 700 regional businesses and job creators, **OPPOSES** Senate Bill SB0565 – Expansion of Commercial Gaming - Internet Gaming Referendum.

This legislation, the legalization of online gambling in Maryland, could result in several catastrophic economic impacts including a statewide personal income decline of \$65M, a loss of \$1.9M in state income taxes, and a loss of \$1.2M in local income tax each year.

To legalize iGaming without sufficient time to research its potential impacts does a disservice to the people and businesses that support and contribute to Maryland’s economy. Beyond this potential harm to our state’s finances, legalized online gambling will almost certainly result in a rise in gambling addiction, which puts the wellbeing and livelihood of Marylanders at serious risk. The Sage Policy Group and Anne Arundel County Chamber of Commerce published a new report further addressing the potential impacts of iGaming, including:

Job losses: There are six brick and mortar casinos in the state which support 27,000 jobs as of 2023, according to the American Gaming Association. iGaming jobs are often held out of state which will cause a decline in locally held jobs and available wages and benefits.

Harm to surrounding businesses: Potential expansion of brick-and-mortar casinos may halt, which limits possible revenue increases and traffic generation for other nearby businesses which benefit from casino traffic. Surrounding entertainment and shopping clusters, many of which opened because of casino traffic, will lose business as fewer guests travel to brick-and-mortar locations.

Lost opportunities: Leisure and hospitality are struggling to recover from the pandemic. The loss of casino jobs and vendor opportunities will further harm the success of local businesses.

Limited wages: iGaming could limit job opportunities for Marylanders with only a high school diploma who currently have access to positions like table games dealer which provide living wages and benefits but may disappear if iGaming is legalized.

The Ocean City Chamber respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE REPORT for SB0565**. Please feel free to contact the Chamber directly at 410-213-0144, or Dennis F. Rasmussen, df@rasmussengrp.net at 410-821-4445 should you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

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