

HB 1192 - Video Lottery Employee Licenses - Crimes

Uploaded by: Kam Bridges

Position: FAV

JOTF JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE

Advocating better skills, jobs, and incomes

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1192

Video Lottery Employee Licenses - Crimes of Moral Turpitude - Alterations

TO: Hon. Guy Guzzone, Chair, and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

FROM: Job Opportunities Task Force

DATE: March 26, 2024

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that develops and advocates policies and programs to increase the skills, job opportunities, and incomes of low-wage workers and job seekers in Maryland. **JOTF supports House Bill 1192, which would exempt an applicant for a video lottery employee license from disqualification for conviction, active parole, or probation within the prior seven years or current prosecution for any crimes involving moral turpitude if the conviction, active parole, probation, or prosecution involves a nonviolent misdemeanor offense, other than a crime involving gambling or the applicant will not be employed by the video lottery operation licensee in the operation of gaming or security.**

Maryland is currently facing a critical labor shortage. According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's [worker shortage index](#), Maryland falls within the "most severe" category with only 33 available workers for every 100 open jobs. The same report cites Maryland as having 54,778 unemployed workers, which it defines as "people that do not have a job, have looked for work in the last four weeks, and are currently available and able to work."

Across all industries, Maryland needs to reexamine the practices and qualifications that act as barriers or deterrents for individuals to obtain gainful employment. That is not to say that there should be no standards, be it education, experience, or safety considerations, that employers can require of prospective employees. However, these standards should be reflective of their ability to adequately perform the work and maintain a work environment that is safe for the public, the employees, and the employer. Criminal records should be used as a metric to determine whether a person should be hired, but only when their record has a direct relationship on their ability to do the job. House Bill 1192 acknowledges this fact by taking into account the nature of the offense and the position the applicant would hold within the State Lottery and Gaming Control Commission. This bill is a definitive step in the right direction in addressing Maryland's workforce shortage.

For these reasons, JOTF supports House Bill 1192 and urges a favorable report.

For more information, contact:

Kam Bridges / Senior Public Policy Advocate / Kam@jotf.org

HB 1192 Feldmark bill testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Mark Stewart

Position: FAV

Testimony of The Cordish Companies and Live! Casino Hotel Maryland

Presented by Mark Stewart, General Counsel

In SUPPORT of HB 1192

Budget and Taxation Committee Hearing

March 26, 2024

On behalf of The Cordish Companies and Live! Casino Hotel Maryland, I respectfully submit this written testimony **in support** of HB 1192, which expands opportunities for employment in Maryland's casino gaming industry.

Labor shortages are the most demanding issue for the Maryland hospitality and tourism industry today. Employers at restaurants, hotels, and casinos around Maryland continue to look for employees to keep their doors open for normal business hours. The impact of these shortages reverberates throughout the industry, posing a significant challenge to maintain the standards expected by guests. While conditions have improved since May 2023, when 82% of the hospitality industry reported staffing shortages, the situation remains challenging. HB1192 will ease these shortages, while also providing appropriately tailored employment opportunities for persons involved in the criminal justice system.

Nearly one in three American adults have been arrested by the age of 23, as reported by the National Institute of Justice. Research also shows that a criminal record reduces the likelihood of a job callback or offer by nearly 50%. The effect is even more pronounced for African American men. A person's criminal record should not equate to a lifetime of social and economic disadvantage. The road to meaningful employment for such individuals is fraught with obstacles. When one seems to be overcome, another arises. This is the struggle for many of the justice impacted individuals in our State. HB 1192 opens the door to gaming industry employment for such individuals while simultaneously ensuring the integrity of gaming in Maryland.

No healthy economy can sustain a large and growing population of unemployable workers, especially in communities already hard hit by joblessness. Removing employment barriers will reduce the welfare rolls and social services costs, benefit local businesses, and ease social and economic burdens on families and communities. We encourage a favorable report on HB 1192.

Senate B&T In Favor of HB1192 UNITE HERE M.Hachey

Uploaded by: Roxie Herbekian

Position: FAV

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.