Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I am respectfully submitting this testimony as a 24-year advocate in the field of player health in legalized gambling.

As the CEO of the Massachusetts Council on Gaming and Health we are often asked to weigh in on legislation and regulations that best provide a safety net for people who make the choice to gamble. And rarely can we be preemptive in our approach. Most of the time we are trying to solve problems that have been created after gaming was legalized and launched. Maryland is admirable to propose such a strong safety net prior to problems being created and/or exacerbated.

We talk to people who gamble every day. They do not always know why or how they got started, but they do not know how to stop. And they typically feel compelled to gamble out of their means and comfort but can't figure out how they got to that spot. And it typically is due to a complex web of external and internal factors. But even when they seek treatment or go to 12 step meetings or even talk to a peer, they continue to feel urges. That is often strongly influenced by their environment. Gambling is everywhere, but so are the people and entities that are "egging" people on with enticements, advertisements, and untruths.

But how does a regulator control and manage the ubiquitous world of gambling advertisements and influencers? It is not an easy task. Some regulators hire more staff, but that often results in a defeated team that is forever faced with gaps and new products "springing" up. Others rely on their licensees to be up front and honest, but that leaves a lot of the third party affiliates not mentioned. And even content warnings are thrown off their "game" by changes in language.

The only way to get at this and to be able to properly address it is through utilizing technology to scour the internet and log and analyze what is found. We have come to use AI for so many things, and it is most necessary for solutions to complex problems such as this. Plus, with

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proper "training" it can keep up with the rapid evolution of gaming language, platforms, and graphics, as well as the tenor & purpose of conversations between individuals and on streams.

I wish that advertising bans were enough, but many US states and countries across Europe has proven that they are not. I think it will take states such as Maryland to stand up and provide the intricate and interwoven tools and resources for people, such as what Senate Bill 708 proposes, to get there. Thank you for your tenacity and leadership.

I am writing from Massachusetts because this type of leadership will have a national impact. As an advocate and a service provider, we really hope you find it possible to move this forward.

Sincerely,

Marlene D. Warner
CEO, MACGH