



Alfred C. Liggins, III
Chief Executive Officer

Direct Dial: 301-429-2643
Direct Fax: 301-306-9694
Alfred@urban1.com

House Bill 17
HEARING BEFORE The Ways and Means Committee
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TESTIMONY OF ALFRED C. LIGGINS, III

I am Alfred C. Liggins, III, the CEO of Urban One, Inc. We are the largest diversified media company that primarily targets Black Americans and urban consumers in the United States. Founded by my mother and our Chairperson, Kathy Hughes, 44 years ago in 1980, we own TV One and CLEO TV, which together serve 78 million households, and 64 broadcast stations in 13 of the most populous urban markets in the United States, including 10 stations in the Washington and Baltimore markets reaching the vast majority of Maryland's African-American population. Our mission is to be the most trusted source in the African-American community that informs, entertains and inspires our audience by providing culturally relevant, integrated content through our radio, television, and digital platforms. We were also the largest minority owner of MGM National Harbor Casino and have been licensed by the Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Commission.

Our headquarters has been in Maryland since 1998. We employ more than 1200 people nation-wide and approximately 350 people in Maryland. We want to expand our business operations and employ a lot more people right here in Maryland.





We believe that our experience in both the film and TV broadcast industry and the casino gaming industry, along with our marketing reach, creates a unique opportunity for us to launch our own Maryland-based, Urban One branded on-line casino. We would host a state-of-the-art broadcast studio that would house our live dealer operations, which we would offer to other iGaming licensees in Maryland and across the country. This studio would also support the Maryland Film Office in its efforts to attract producers of film and TV shows to the state and be anchored by a multi-million dollar production commitment from Urban One to produce film and TV content right here in Maryland without the need for state tax incentives otherwise available to us.

Both Senate Bill 340 and HB 17 state that the intent of the General Assembly is to implement iGaming in a manner consistent with law that maximizes the ability of minorities, women, and minority and women owned businesses to "participate" in the internet gaming industry. While we applaud the bill's outreach to social equity applicants and participation by individuals whose net worth falls below a certain cap, for our company, "participate" means the opportunity to own and operate the business, invest our own capital with no need for special accommodations from the State or regulators, and the ability to create more opportunities for Marylanders.

We are here to support Senate Bill 340, but with amendments that would clarify the CAPEX commitments and certain employee headcount requirements for a Maryland-based business to qualify for an iGaming license, as well as clarify that the applicant for an iGaming license may satisfy certain requirements through performance by its parent corporation or a subsidiary thereof.

Alfred

