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**Testimony of UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO on
HOUSE BILL 17 - Internet Gaming - Authorization and Implementation
Oppose**

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins and members of the House Ways and Means Committee,

On behalf of the members of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1994 MCGEO, I am writing to express our strong **opposition** to HB 17, Internet Gaming – Authorization and Implementation. This legislation would permit the expansion of internet-based gaming (“lgaming”) in Maryland. While we recognize the need for innovative solutions to generate state revenue, we believe the approval of lgaming would come at a significant cost to our communities, particularly the working families we represent.

Our concerns about lgaming are multifaceted and deeply rooted in our mission to protect and uplift workers. First and foremost, lgaming poses a serious threat to the economic stability of Maryland’s brick-and-mortar gaming establishments, which employ thousands of unionized workers. The introduction of internet-based gambling platforms could siphon revenue away from these facilities, leading to job losses, reduced hours, and diminished benefits for hardworking Marylanders who rely on these positions to support their families.

Moreover, lgaming creates a heightened risk of gambling addiction and financial hardship for vulnerable populations. The ease of access associated with online gambling platforms disproportionately impacts individuals with limited resources, exacerbating economic inequities in our state. Maryland has already demonstrated a commitment to responsible gaming practices through its regulation of existing gambling institutions, but safeguards are far more challenging to enforce in the virtual environment of lgaming.

We also urge you to consider the broader social implications of lgaming. Local gaming establishments contribute to Maryland communities not only by creating jobs but also by supporting local businesses and funding public programs through their tax contributions. Allowing lgaming would undermine these benefits and redirect profits away from Maryland’s economy to out-of-state or even foreign entities operating online platforms.

We urge you to stand with Maryland’s workers, families, and communities by rejecting the expansion of lgaming in our state.