



**Testimony in Support of House Bill 225
Gaming – Sports Wagering – Implementation**

**Ways and Means Committee
February 4th, 2020
1:00 pm**

House Bill 225 (Gaming – Sports Wagering – Implementation) would authorize sports betting in the State of Maryland and dedicate the tax revenues on that activity to the Education Trust Fund. Strong Schools Maryland supports the contribution that sports betting would make towards the several sources of revenue, both current and new, that will be required to fully fund the Kirwan recommendations.

Strong Schools Maryland is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization whose sole mission is to establish a world-class public education system for every student in Maryland. We are composed of thousands of volunteers and supporters in nearly every county in the state. Our supporters consist of parents, grandparents, small business owners, retirees, students, teachers, and Marylanders from every background and age. We have built support for implementing and fully funding the 10-year phase in of the Kirwan Commission's recommendations.

A strong public school system is critical to the long term success of our state. In order to build strong schools in every Maryland community, we must implement a new, equitable, accountable, and sustainable funding formula based on the Kirwan Commission's recommendations. A sustainable funding source is critical in order to keep the promise our state has made to families as well as meet our constitutional obligation of a thorough and efficient public education system supported and maintained by taxation. To that end, Strong Schools Maryland supports House Bill 225 to contribute to the several sources of revenue, both current and new, that will be required to fully fund the Kirwan recommendations.

We are aware of multiple competing proposals about the best way to implement sports betting in the state of Maryland. We are not in a position to independently evaluate each proposal but different proposals can have varied impacts on the total revenue in the Education Trust Fund. Due to the impact on the Education Trust Fund and the states' ability to fully fund the Kirwan Commission recommendations, Strong Schools Maryland urges the committee to adopt the sports betting licensing plan that will maximize revenues to the Education Trust Fund, thus directing the most money into our public schools.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report for House Bill 225.