

ANDREA FLETCHER HARRISON

Legislative District 24  
Prince George's County

Economic Matters Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 204  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
301-858-3919 · 410-841-3919  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3919  
AndreaFletcher.Harrison@house.state.md.us

## THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Written Testimony on HB 980 – Sports Wagering – Prince George's County Stadiums – Sports Wagering  
Community Impact Fund as presented to Ways and Means Committee

March 2, 2022

Good afternoon Madam Chair, Mr. Vice Chair and members of the Ways and Means Committee. For the record, I am Delegate Andrea Fletcher Harrison here to present HB980 – Sports Wagering- Prince George's County Stadiums – Sports Wagering Community Impact Fund.

For many years, there was a professional football franchise that played in Washington, D.C. Seeking a larger and more modern arena, the team moved to Prince George's County and played its first game in Landover, in 1997. The professional sports stadium was built on former farmland that was surrounded by existing communities. As with any new venue of such magnitude, traffic was heavy and fans seeking relief often traversed these existing communities, sometimes blocking ingress and egress of the residents, essentially trapping them in their respective communities.

The WMATA metro system extended its rail lines, with several new stops in Prince George's County, one of which is within walking distance of the professional sports stadium. This has increased foot traffic, sometimes through said communities, but most certainly immediately adjacent to the communities. These are common ownership communities, responsible for their common property upkeep and maintenance including some roadway repaving, lighting and other common area maintenance and repair.

These property owners have learned to deal with the traffic, but at a cost. They have not seen an increase in their property value with the addition of this venue, their common areas and even some properties immediately along the walking path to the metro station have sometimes been destroyed, and until the past year, the management and ownership of the franchise team has been reluctant to assist or even talk with these communities. This has gone on for the 20+ years these common ownership communities have lived in the shadow of this arena.

In 2015, former Delegate Carolyn J.B. Howard successfully introduced and passed legislation, at the request of the team, to create a 50/50 raffle to occur during games for the team's Charitable Foundation. In section 13.1911.1 of the criminal code article it reads, in section (D)(1) "The proceeds of a raffle shall be used to (I) benefit the residents of Prince George's County." Last year in HB589-21, this section was amended to read that "Proceeds of a raffle shall be used to benefit the residents of the common ownership and cooperative communities located in whole or in part within an estimated 1-mile radius of property owned or under the control of the Professional Football Team."

The idea behind this change was to assist the communities in the stadium's footprint with projects such as road resurfacing, lighting upgrades and other capital projects. As stated earlier these are projects which are the sole responsibility of the common ownership communities, and are not handled by county's public works department.

While we thought the 50/50 would assist, we were notified after the passage of HB589, the charitable foundation funds could only be used for non-profit entities, such as schools, boys and girls clubs, etc. Therefore, these common ownership communities are not eligible recipients of 50/50 funds. Additionally, we have been notified that there were no funds available from this year's 50/50 raffle, (although we were told during last year's discussion that although the team was only able to play 5 games due to the covid-19 shutdown, nearly \$350,000 had been raised.)

These communities sitting in shadow of the Prince George's County Professional Sports Stadium have suffered for such a very long time. They have been a compliant neighbor since they really have no other choice. They have dealt with many lost drivers, have had their newly planted shrubbery pulled up and destroyed and even have had to deal with inebriated fans urinating in their yards. It's time these common ownership communities have some sort of relief.

HB980 simply seeks 5% of the sports wagering proceeds generated at a Professional Sports Stadium located in Prince George's County, distributed monthly to a sports wagering community impact fund for common ownership communities within a 1-mile radius of said stadium for development including housing and other public improvements.

You should have an amendment sheet in your packet that more clearly defines who shall have access to these grant funds and how the funds are to be used.

Members of the committee, colleagues, I respectfully request a favorable report with my amendments on HB980. Thank you.