



**Senate Budget & Tax Committee
February 15, 2023**

**Senate Bill 267
Internet Gaming - Authorization and Implementation
Oppose**

NCADD-Maryland opposes Senate Bill 267, which would ask voters to authorize internet casino gambling. This would allow people to access a full casino experience from anywhere and anytime, vastly expanding the gambling industry and the ills that ensue.

Internet casinos present myriad public health concerns. First, it allows people to participate in casino games, such as poker, blackjack, and roulette, on any device with internet connectivity. In Maryland, these games are currently only accessible at a brick-and-mortar casino. Having the offerings of a casino at one's fingertips can result in increased problem gambling behavior.

Numerous international studies have found that internet casino gaming has a greater prevalence of problem gambling than brick-and-mortar casino gaming.¹ In an Australian study, the rate of problem gambling among non-internet gamblers was 0.9%, while the rate among internet casino gamblers was 2.7%.² A study of international gamblers as a whole found a similar relationship between internet gaming and problem gambling, with the prevalence rate of problem gambling being 17.1% amongst internet gamers and much lower 4.1% amongst non- internet gamers.³

There is currently a lack of research on the public health issues posed by internet casino gaming in the United States, as only six states currently allow online casinos.⁴ However, one of the first states to adopt legislation allowing internet gaming, New Jersey, has some alarming statistics. The state emphasized the Responsible Gaming (RG) features that would accompany online casinos, such as the ability to set deposit and time limits, and the option to self-exclude.⁵ However, even with these RG measures in place, it was found that the use of these measures was very low, with only around 1% of all internet gaming account holders in the state accessing the most popular RG measure – the deposit limit.⁶ This emphasizes that the likely increase in problem gambling that could result from internet gaming cannot be curtailed by accompanying RG measures.

The state should not rush into more online gaming opportunities on the heels of internet sports wagering. NCADD-Maryland urges an unfavorable report on SB 267.

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4610999/>

² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4610999/>

³ <https://www.nj.gov/oag/ge/2015news/ResponsibleGamingFinalReport%202015.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.playusa.com/us/>

⁵ <https://www.nj.gov/oag/ge/2015news/ResponsibleGamingFinalReport%202015.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.nj.gov/oag/ge/2015news/ResponsibleGamingFinalReport%202015.pdf>