



## **SB 595 – Gaming – Problem Gambling Fund – Table Game Fees and Distribution of Sports Wagering Proceeds**

**Committee: Budget and Taxation**

**Date: March 8, 2023**

**POSITION: Support**

**The Maryland Coalition of Families:** Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF) helps families who care for a loved one with behavioral health needs. Using personal experience, our staff provide one-to-one peer support and navigation services to family members with a child, youth or adult with a mental health, substance use or gambling challenge.

---

At Maryland Coalition of Families we see first-hand the damage that problem gambling can do to a family. Therefore we are in strong support of SB 595, which requires that 1% of the proceeds from sports wagering be distributed to the Problem Gambling Fund.

Each time the State of Maryland has expanded legalized gambling in the last 15 years, the General Assembly has established a new funding stream to ensure that problem gambling education, prevention, and treatment were available for anyone experiencing problems that accompany gambling. A fee was assessed for slot machines. A fee was also assessed for casino table games. **But no such effective funding stream accompanied the state's expansion into sports wagering.**

When the General Assembly legalized sports wagering in Maryland, it specified that any funds that were not claimed 182 days after the wager is won would go to the Problem Gambling Fund. However, with more than 90% of people placing their sports bets online, there are no unclaimed prizes. Unlike lottery tickets where a winner has to go to a retailer to claim their prize, the payout when a person places a bet online goes directly into the account the player established with the sportsbook operator. As a result, Maryland has effectively expanded gambling without increasing funds for the Problem Gambling Fund to help Marylanders.

The 2020 Maryland Gambling Prevalence Study showed that there was an increase in problem gambling prevalence among Maryland residents from 2017-2020, rising from 0.7% to 3.1%.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling, *Statewide Gambling Prevalence in Maryland: 2020*, MARYLAND CENTER OF EXCELLENCE ON PROBLEM GAMBLING (2020), <https://www.mdproblemgambling.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Gambling-Prevalence-study-2020-FINAL.pdf>

Nationwide, the risks for gambling addiction grew by 30% after states were given authority to legalize sports wagering.<sup>2</sup> There is little doubt that the incidence of problem gambling will continue to grow with the expansion to sports betting.

This bill will ensure that adults who choose to place sports bets will have the education to keep themselves safe when they do it. We urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 595.

**Ann Geddes**  
**Director of Public Policy**  
**The Maryland Coalition of Families**  
**8950 State Route 108, Suite 223**  
**Columbia, Maryland 21045**  
**Phone: 443-926-3396**  
[ageddes@mdcoalition.org](mailto:ageddes@mdcoalition.org)

---

<sup>2</sup> Marsha Mercer, *As Sports Betting Grows, States Tackle Teenage Problem Gambling*, THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS (Jul. 12, 2022), <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2022/07/12/as-sports-betting-grows-states-tackle-teenage-problem-gambling>.