



March 8, 2023

Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West, Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 621 - Gaming - Sports Wagering - Independent Evaluation of Sports Wagering Content

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee:

The Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency (“MLGCA” or “Agency”) submits this letter of information to the Budget and Taxation Committee (“Committee”) as background information regarding Senate Bill 621 – Gaming - Sports Wagering - Independent Evaluation of Sports Wagering Content.

As SB621 is currently drafted, it would require the Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Commission (“MLGCC” or “Commission”) by December 31, 2023, to identify and accredit independent evaluators that would evaluate the sports wagering content provided to sports wagering licensees and sports wagering operators by sports wagering experts, sports wagering influencers, and content partners. The bill also would require MLGCC to establish standards of practice governing sports wagering content and by April 1, 2024, require sports wagering licensees and sports wagering operators that advertise in the State to contract with an independent evaluator to evaluate and rate the sports wagering licensee’s sports wagering content experts, influencers and partners.

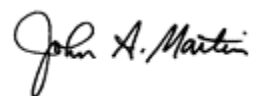
This proposed legislation may require MLGCA to hire additional personnel who have expertise in evaluating online sports wagering content to be able to identify and accredit “independent evaluators” who would evaluate and rate “sports wagering content” produced by “sports wagering experts” and “sports wagering influencers”. MLGCC only licenses persons and entities that it regulates. Under the proposed bill, MLGCC would have the unique responsibility of identifying and accrediting independent evaluators, which is something beyond its capabilities. MLGCC is also unsure of how to it would establish standards of practice governing sports wagering content. Additionally, MLGCA believes an “independent evaluator of sports wagering content” or an entity conducting an “independent evaluation of sports wagering content” that is licensed by MLGCC should not be compensated by sports wagering licensees and operators.

MLGCA appreciates the collaboration with the bill sponsor on proposed amendments that would alleviate most of these concerns by making this legislation enabling. We would like to highlight these changes as being critical to MLGCA being able to implement this proposed bill:

1. Strike all mention of “identify and accredit”, and insert “license”
2. Add a definition of “Independent Evaluator of Sports Wagering Content”
3. Add MLGCC “shall promulgate regulations for the licensure of independent evaluators”
4. Add an independent evaluator “shall pay a license fee of not less than \$5,000 as determined by MLGCC”

Thank you for your consideration of this information. If you should have any questions or need more information about this subject, please do not hesitate to contact Sean Ford, MLGCA’s Director of Legislation and Policy Development, at 410-230-8988 or sean.ford@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John A. Martin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a distinct "A".

John A. Martin
Director

cc: All Committee Members
Senators Zucker and Hettleman