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Prince George's County

Ways and Means Committee

Subcommittees

Racing and Gaming

Revenues

Chair

Prince George's County House Delegation



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Favorable Testimony

HB1288: Video Lottery Employee Licenses - Crimes of Moral Turpitude or Gambling Offenses – Alterations

Good Afternoon Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins and esteemed colleagues of the Ways and Means Committee. I respectfully urge the Committee to adopt a favorable report on HB1288.

State gaming license requirements in Maryland often disqualify individuals charged with non-violent drug offenses from obtaining casino gaming licenses, preventing such individuals from working in casinos. These archaic laws make it challenging for casino operators, including MGM National Harbor, to offer life changing careers, despite applicants being otherwise qualified.

In January 2020, the New Jersey State Legislature passed a Bill that would allow individuals who complete “Recovery Court” to be eligible to obtain a casino licenses. This Bill, signed by Governor Phil Murphy in 2020, allows people that have struggled with addiction issues an opportunity at a career that before has been challenging for many in the same situation to find.

HB1288 amends Subtitle 1A - Video Lottery Terminals § 9-1A-14 that disqualifies certain individuals from obtaining gaming licenses. This bill will qualify licensure of individuals who have graduated from Problem Solving Courts (e.g. Drug Court, DUI Court, Re-entry Court) allowing casinos throughout Maryland to give these individuals an opportunity for good paying jobs with strong health care benefits. There are currently 62 Problem Solving Courts in the State and last year 485 applicants graduated from the program. Every County in the State, save 2 out of 23, has these Courts and they have been regarded as highly effective at changing behavior.

Supporting re-entry resources is critical for our State to ensure we reduce recidivism and grow our workforce. One of the most important resources we can equip people with is meaningful employment and job opportunities. These individuals have gone through a Problem Solving Court system and should therefore be able to secure these licensures under the recognition that they have changed the behavior that caused them to become involved in the judicial system. HB1288 costs the State \$0 and would benefit it immensely.

For these reasons, I once more respectfully urge a favorable report on HB429. Thank you. If there are any questions, please reach out to our Office directly and we will respond as soon as possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick Charles".

Delegate Nick Charles

Chairman, Prince George's County House Delegation