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Date: February 9, 2023
To: Ways & Means Committee
From: Riverboat on the Potomac Managing Partners

Subject: Testimony for House Bill 224 State Lottery – Instant Ticket Lottery Machine - Fraternal Organizations (ITLMs for Homeless Veterans Act)

Good afternoon, Chairwoman Atterbeary and members of the committee. My name is Antonio Jones, and I am one of the owners of the Gaming license for Riverboat on the Potomac, located in Charles County. We are proud to say that we are now the first 100% minority owned sports betting licensee (retail and mobile) in the country, an accomplishment which speaks to the commitment to inclusion fostered in my home state of Maryland. Sports betting was a clear and definitive step forward to bring small and minority businesses into the gaming industry, and HB 224 presents another opportunity to do so. We request a favorable report on this bill with amendments that would expand the authorization of these five instant ticket lottery machines to include our facility. We have proven in our ability to play a role in the sports betting market, having just entered month six of operation. And I would like to remind the Committee that the Riverboat once had slot machines, and our position in Charles County means that most of the tax revenue we generate comes from Virginians.

For those of you who don't know, the Riverboat's building is physically located in the Potomac River in Charles County, but our front door faces Colonial Beach, VA. 90% of our guests are from Virginia. Maryland used to have many of these little casinos that dotted the shores of the Potomac, but today, we are the only building remaining. Since becoming an OTB, the Riverboat has been trying to restore and modernize Maryland's historic gaming legacy with a focus on the new face of Maryland. As an MBE ourselves, we contracted with several Maryland-based MBE and other minority-owned businesses to perform the sports betting buildout. Customer reviews of the final construction are, in a word, glowing.

We appreciate the steps Maryland is taking to expand the gaming industry for veterans and historically underrepresented groups. For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report for this bill with amendments that would include our facility in Charles County."

Respectfully yours,

Antonio Jones,
Riverboat on the Potomac, Managing Member