

**Testimony offered on behalf of:
Althea Lynne**

IN OPPOSITION TO:

**SB 603– Internet Gaming
Maryland Senate
Budget and Taxation Committee
Hearing: 2/28/2024 @ 1:00 pm**

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and Honorable Members of the House Ways and Means Committee.

My name is Althea Lynne. I am a bartender at Live! Casino and Hotel. I was hired one week after the casino opened in 2012. I am here to share my story of how Live! has helped me and my family, and why I am opposed to iGaming in the State of Maryland.

I was born and raised in Maryland. Most of my time was spent in Baltimore City, Baltimore County and now, Anne Arundel County. I now live in Pasadena.

I have been in the beverage service industry my entire career. Before joining Live, I worked in some small bars and night clubs, and at banquets functions.

I came from a family that was on public assistance. My father was an addict, and my mother did the best she could for my siblings and me. We were often on food stamps. We had very little and scraped by each week just to be fed.

Working in the beverage service industry, I was living paycheck to paycheck. I often worked double shifts or two jobs to get by. While I had high hopes to do better than my parents, I wasn't sure it would happen. Live! has given me that opportunity.

Now, at Live, I have a steady job. I earn over \$100,000 a year. I have a 401k plan with a Company match, I have paid time off, sick leave, bereavement leave, and health benefits. Live also has an onsite medical clinic that I can go to on a moment's notice....FREE OF CHARGE. I have received bonuses every year at Live!. I had none of these perks when I was working bars and banquets.

My husband and I have four children. Two girls and two boys. My oldest daughter is 22 and now works with me at Live. My other daughter just graduated college. In a bit of coincidence, her graduation ceremony was at Live!, in The Hall.

My two boys are both younger, 15 and 10, and every night they hear me talk about how I enjoy working at Live. They also hear me discuss how well Live has treated me. I feel blessed.

With my income and that of my husband's, I was able to buy a house, help pay for my daughter's college, and even went to Jamaica last year to renew my wedding vows with my husband. Not bad for a bartender.

Every day I am at Live I get to greet customers and get to know them. Some have become friends. Just last week, a sweet older couple came in and sat at my bar. I chatted with them for over an hour. They were delightful and when they left, they went out of their way to thank me for my kindness and personal touch. It warmed my heart.

In many restaurants and bars, there are slow periods. Not at Live. Not even before the COVID shutdown and not after we reopened. If igaming is approved, people will have no reason to come to our property. They will be able to game from their phone, wherever they are. They will not get the same guest experience that I am able to offer. This will hurt my guests, and it will hurt Live. And it will hurt me. I will lose guests, friends and coworkers.

I am truly afraid that if iGaming passes, it will seriously hurt my job, my income, my job security, and that of my coworkers. After finally finding a safe, secure place to work, iGaming will take much of this away.

I urge you to vote against the iGaming Bill.

Althea Lynne
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