



Edwards & Hill Office Furniture

*Quality Furnishings and
Outstanding Service for Any Space*

February 26, 2024

Chair and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee
Room 3 Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SB603 – Internet Gaming – Authorization and Implementation.

My name is Tony Hill, and I am one of the founding members of Edwards & Hill Office Furniture, a Full-Service Furniture Dealership founded and headquartered in the state of Maryland in 1998. For 25 years we have operated in the state and have grown significantly because of our work with Maryland Casinos.

We not only worked on all the major casinos in the state of Maryland, Maryland Live, MGM and Horseshoe Casinos but we did the original installation and continue to work with them to this day. They have become trusted partners that have afforded us the opportunity to add to our staff and grow our footprint. As a result, we are contributing more as a business to the Maryland economy and our employees as well as those that we hire indirectly add even more to the state's bottom line.

Part of our growth has been because we have access to non-traditional funding in the form of a line of credit that is funded by revenue from the slots of the brick-and-mortar casinos. Were it not for this line of credit, we would not have been able to take on many of the projects that we have completed over the years. When we think about casinos in Maryland, we have to think far beyond their doors when considering the economic impact.

An important question to ask is, will any revenue generated by online casinos come anywhere close to the impact that our current casinos have had and continue to have in terms of the people they employ and the businesses like mine that grow with them and supply products and services that are ongoing as long as the casinos have a healthy revenue. Will online casinos cut into the profit of traditional casinos and reduce the amount of furniture that the Casinos buy from my company as well as products and services from other companies that do business with them, thus having a negative ripple effect on the economy? If that does happen, how many employees will the online casinos have? How much furniture, food, flatware, linen, garbage bags, sanitizers and other cleaning supplies will the online casinos buy?

Before we look at what online casinos will bring to our great state of Maryland, we need to take a good long look at what they will take away. There was a time when Atlantic City was the place to go if you wanted to visit a casino on the east coast. But something happened and the casino industry in Atlantic City plummeted. It would be a shame to see that happen in Maryland. In the long run, I believe that online casinos are not good for the state

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and it is my request that you vote no to bringing online casinos to the state.

Thank you for allowing me to share my experience with you and what I believe would be the ramifications of this legislation on my business as well as the state economy.

Sincerely,



Tony Hill
Managing Member
Edwards & Hill Communications, LLC.

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