

**Testimony Against**  
**SB 0603 Internet Gaming – Authorization and Implementation**  
**SB 0565 Expansion of Commercial Gaming - Internet Gaming referendum**  
Committee on Budget and Taxation  
Maryland Senate  
Wednesday, February 28, 2024  
Presented by Tracy Lingo, President of UNITE HERE Local 7

Good afternoon, Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe and members of the Maryland Senate Committee on Budget and Taxation.

My name is Tracy Lingo, I am the president of UNITE HERE Local 7. UNITE HERE is the largest Union of Casino workers in the United States. Our Union also represents hotel, food service, stadium and airport hospitality workers nationally and in Maryland.

I appreciate the opportunity to come before you today. The Gaming industry has expanded significantly over the last few decades. This expansion in States like Maryland, when done right, can fund important State and local initiatives, spur economic development beyond the Casinos and provide family sustaining jobs which further advances our economy.

iGaming is being touted as a quick fix to Maryland's budget. On behalf of thousands of Maryland's Casino workers and their local communities I ask that you look beyond this simplistic promise. iGaming if legalized in Maryland would in fact completely undermine the great progress that has and is being made in the areas of local development and job creation. It would also accelerate the most negative aspect of legalized gambling, which is problem gambling addiction.

Today you are going to hear stories from workers that will make you as state legislators feel good. Stories about how your work to develop Casino Gaming in our state has resulted in people getting jobs and thriving.

All of us want Maryland to be a great place to live and work—a state with a strong economy that allows workers to stand on their own feet and to support themselves and their families.

iGaming will hurt, not help us in reaching this goal.

UNITE HERE and other casino workers unions in Maryland are in opposition to all legislation that would lead to the legalization of iGaming in Maryland. I have included in my written testimony petitions signed by union and non-union Maryland Casino workers who ask that you please halt all consideration of legalizing iGaming in Maryland.

First and foremost, the impact on the brick-and-mortar Casinos will be dramatic. The Innovation Report that was commissioned by the Maryland Gaming and Lottery Control Agency states clearly that we can expect a 10.2% loss of brick-and-mortar gaming revenue.

Maryland's six brick-and-mortar casinos directly employ 6,678 people as of January. According to the American Gaming Association, Maryland's gaming industry creates \$5.78 billion in economic impact and supports 27,380 jobs. The Sage Policy Group projected that legalizing iGaming could eliminate 685 direct jobs with \$33.6 million in lost annual income and a total loss of approximately 1,215 jobs with over \$65 million in lost annual income through direct and secondary effects. iGaming will not only inhibit future Maryland casino job growth, but will also lead to a loss of jobs, Union jobs.

Maryland's brick-and-mortar casino have fostered economic development connected to or adjacent to the Casinos. Ocean Downs Casino has plans on hold to construct a hotel by its casino. The Warner Street corridor next to the Horseshoe Baltimore Casino has begun developing an entertainment district which includes plans to build a hotel. The MGM Casino is a major engine for the development taking place at National Harbor in Prince George's County. iGaming will reduce the foot traffic in the Casinos and have a negative impact on all of these development plans. Why would a casino invest additional capital to improve or expand its casino/entertainment/hotel footprint if it can make money with much less investment in iGaming?

Problem Gaming. All indicators point to an exponential increase in problem gaming if Maryland enacts iGaming. The National Problem Gaming Council's 2021 Survey on Gambling Attributes found that online gamblers were as much as 8x more likely to report compulsive gambling problems and addictive behavior. More than 36% of iGaming players in PA experience problem gambling according to a 2022 report conducted for the PA Department of Drug & Alcohol Programs. The national director of Stop Predatory Gambling & Campaign for Gambling-Free Kids recently stated that:

"Online gambling is like gambling fentanyl, it's like the most extreme form of all. It's opening a casino right in your bedroom so you can sit there in your pajamas and lose everything."

Finally, we all need to be concerned that iGaming will have a negative impact on local jurisdictions. This includes not only a reduction of sales tax and alcohol tax but also less local impact money to the local jurisdictions. This local impact money which is generated from the Casinos is controlled by the local jurisdictions. It is used for a variety of projects including paying for residents' community college tuition, paying for public employees' pensions, and funding environmental sustainability, infrastructure, head start, summer youth and job training programs.

There is a reason why over 40 states, including Nevada, have not enacted iGaming – and why 6 states have recently rejected iGaming legislation. It is clear that iGaming is a job killer and an accelerant to problem gambling that will suppress local development and rob community programs of funds that they currently receive from the local impact money.

Please put Maryland's working families and communities first. Reject all legislation that could advance iGaming in our state.

We ask for an unfavorable reading on both SB 656 and SB 603.

# iGaming is Wrong for Maryland Workers and Communities



UNITE HERE Local 7 and UNITE HERE Local 25 proudly represent 2,400 members who work at the Horseshoe Casino, Ocean Downs Casino, and MGM National Harbor. Through collective bargaining, workers at those casinos have achieved family supporting wages and benefits. Legalizing online casino gambling in Maryland will put these jobs at risk.

## Maryland Jobs with \$65 Million in Income Could Be Eliminated by iGaming

Legalizing iGaming will reduce Maryland’s brick-and-mortar casino revenue by 10.2%, according to a report produced by The Innovation Group for the Maryland Lottery. It based its projection on a comparison of in-person gaming revenues in states with and without iGaming.<sup>i</sup> From 2019 to 2022, states with iGaming saw in-person revenues decline 8.2%, while states without iGaming saw in-person revenues grow 2%, implying a “cannibalization rate” of 10.2%. Maryland’s six brick and mortar casinos directly employ 6,678 people.<sup>ii</sup> According to the American Gaming Association, Maryland’s gaming industry supports 27,380 jobs.<sup>iii</sup> If a 10.2% reduction in brick-and-mortar revenue creates a 10.2% reduction in employment, it would mean a loss of over 680 direct jobs and over 2,700 total jobs. The Sage Policy Group projected a loss of 685 direct jobs with \$33.6 million in lost annual income and a total loss of approximately 1,215 jobs with over \$65 million in lost annual income through direct and secondary effects.<sup>iv</sup>

## Online Sports Betting Slashed In-Person Sports Betting by 42%

Since Maryland legalized online sports betting, in-person sports betting wagers have fallen 42% in the state. In-person sports betting handle peaked in October 2022 at \$39.7 million. Online sports betting launched the following month on November 22. In December, the first full month of online sports betting, in-person handle plummeted to \$18.8 million.

Months	Maryland Average Monthly In-Person Sports Betting Handle
Jan 2022 – Oct 2022 (Online Sports Betting Not Legal in MD)	\$26,339,181
Jan 2023 – Oct 2023 (Online Sports Betting Legal in MD)	\$15,401,425

The impact of online sports betting is already harming Marylanders who work at in-person sportsbooks as attendants, bartenders, servers, and cleaners. Many rely on tips from customers. The impact of legalizing online casino games would harm even more casino workers.

## In-Person Casino Gaming Fosters Economic Development

In-person casino gaming drives investment in hotels, restaurants, retail, and entertainment venues both within and around casino properties. For example, the Horseshoe Casino in Baltimore has been a catalyst for the development of The Walk @ Warner Street that now includes a Top Golf and could include a new music venue, hotel, and retail space in the future.<sup>v</sup> Online gaming will endanger economic development opportunities at casinos throughout the state, undermining the purpose of casino legalization in Maryland.

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<sup>i</sup> The Innovation Group, “iGaming in Maryland,” November 2023

<sup>ii</sup> Maryland Lottery and Gaming Commission, Data Dashboard, January 2024, Retrieved from:

[https://www.mdgaming.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Dashboard\\_January2024\\_2\\_14\\_24.pdf](https://www.mdgaming.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Dashboard_January2024_2_14_24.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> American Gaming Association, “Gaming by the Numbers: Maryland,” as of December 31, 2023. Retrieved from:

<https://www.americangaming.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/AGA-2021-State-Economic-One-Page-Maryland.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> Anirban Basu, Sage Policy Group, Inc., Memo to Anne Arundel County Chamber of Commerce Re: iGaming in

Maryland, January 4, 2024. Retrieved from: [https://annearundelchamber.org/wp-](https://annearundelchamber.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/igamingreport.pdf)

[content/uploads/2024/01/igamingreport.pdf](https://annearundelchamber.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/igamingreport.pdf)

<sup>v</sup> *WBAL 11*, “TopGolf to open Friday as part of newly named entertainment district,” October 25, 2022, Retrieved

from: <https://www.wbaltv.com/article/topgolf-open-fridaythe-walk-at-warner-street-baltimore/41767204>

Caves Valley Partners, “Horseshoe Casino/Warner Street Entertainment District,” Retrieved from:

<https://cavesvalleypartners.com/project/horseshoe-casino/>

# Petition

December 2023

To: The Honorable Wes Moore, Governor of Maryland  
 The Honorable Bill Ferguson, President of the Maryland Senate  
 The Honorable Adrienne Jones, Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates

We, the undersigned employees of Maryland Casinos are opposed to the legalization of iGaming, including live online poker, in our State.

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Maryland legalized Video Lottery Terminals (VLTs) and then table games to a large degree because of job growth and economic development. iGaming is a serious threat to both.

**Please do not approve any measures that would advance iGaming in our state.**

Print Name	Signature	Job at a Md Casino
Chanki Kumbre	CK 023209	Cage Cashier
KIM MILES	KM 015403	SLOT ATTENDANT
Debra Teagan	Debra Teagan	Table Game Dealer
Melissa Colbert	Worker	Beverage Server
Chadnae Paris	Chadnae	Beverage <del>Server</del>
Emani Lee	Emani	Beverage supervisor
Olga Petrikova	Olga	Beverage server
Tara Taylor	Tara	table games
Loren Simpson	Loren	Sportsbook
Eva Poliszczak	Eva Poliszczak	Bar tender
George Haddaway	George Haddaway	bar tender

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Print Name	Signature	Job at a Md Casino
Chris Lighty	Chris Lighty	J-Lots
Andrew Williams	Andrew Williams	Cook EDR
Breyonna Scott	Breyonna Scott	steward
Brian Downham	Brian Downham	EDR
Chranjibi Swas	Chranjibi Swas	Table Games.
Pasitra Inratha	Pasitra Inratha	Table games
Gregory Martin	Gregory Martin	Steward
Tyghera Hursey	Tyghera Hursey	EDR Attendant
Jason Taylor	Jason Taylor	Cook EDR
James Thratt	James Thratt	Table Games

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Print Name	Signature	Job at a Md Casino
Barbara Bullock	Barbara Bullock	
Devilia Castor	Devilia Castor	Horseshoe Dealer Table Game
MARIE ARDREY	MARIE ARDREY	HORSESHOE FACILITIES
BRANPOW STEWART	BRANPOW STEWART	
Robert Caine	Robert Caine	Barback
GAUTAM BK	GAUTAM BK	TABLE GAMES DEALER
Gary Mackey	Gary Mackey	EVS-HD
Denay Lane	Denay Lane	Table games
MELISSA PORTER-BELCH	MELISSA PORTER-BELCH	Table Games
Dominique Brown	Dominique Brown	Slot Attendant





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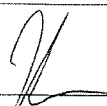
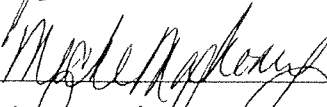
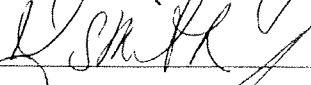
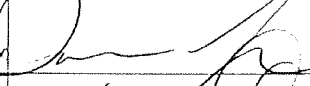


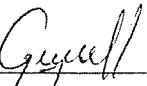
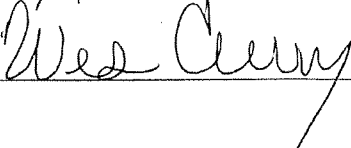
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Print Name	Signature	Job at a Md Casino
Gloria E Shell	Gloria E Shell	<del>Horse shoe</del>
EISA Gonzalez		Horse shoe
JAKOB, CALLAHAN		Horseshoe <del>Horseshoe</del>
MICHE MATHEWY		HORSESHOE
Dzhenn Smith		Horse shoe
Paionna Tucker		Horseshoe
Russell Wilson		Horseshoe
Chelsea Harvin		Horse shoe
Germaine Bahinbal <sup>was</sup>		HORSE SHOE
Wes Curry		H.S. C.

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Print Name	Signature	Job at a Md Casino
Selina Franklin	Selina Franklin	
Jerry Wheeler	Jerry Wheeler	Table Games Dealer
Seralthe Woods	Seralthe Woods	Security
Timy Ward	Timy Ward	Table game dealer
Edward Brown	Edward Brown	EVS
Khond Hunter	Khond Hunter	Steward
Angela Burton	Angela Burton	Table Games Dealer
D'Andre Coyle	D'Andre Coyle	TG Dealer
WAYNE SMITH	Wayne Smith	TG Dealer
Lakayla Muse	Lakayla Muse	TG Deal- Rate

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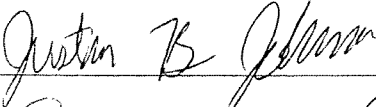
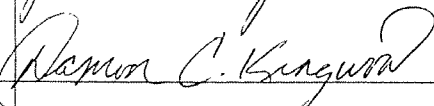
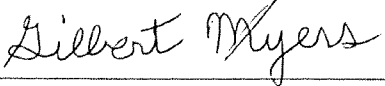
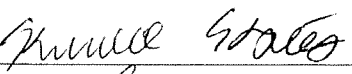


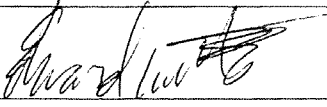

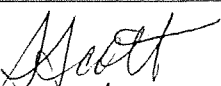
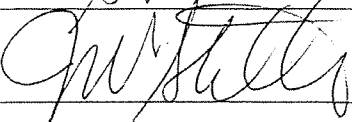
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Print Name	Signature	Job at a Md Casino
Justin B Johnson		Horseshoe Casino
Ramon C. Kingwood		Horseshoe
Gilbert Myers		HORSESHOE
Kenneth Kates		EDR
Wayne Smith		Horseshoe
Abigail Kloss		Horseshoe
Edward Wital		horseshoe
Joshua Cook		TG Horseshoe
SABINA SCOTT		EUS Horseshoe Casino
JASON STILES		COUNT RM

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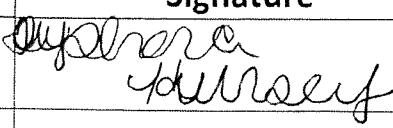
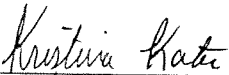
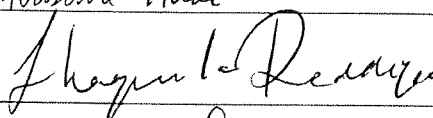
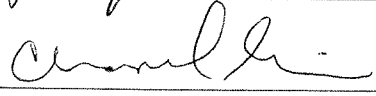

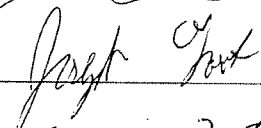
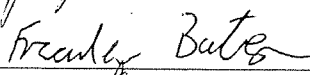
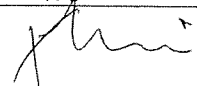
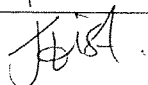
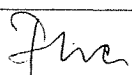
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Kristina Kates		LEAD STEWARD Horseshoe Casino
Shaquila Reddick		EVS Horseshoe Casino
Chanel Ervin		EVS Horseshoe casino
Zach Roselle	 5855	Horseshoe Table Games Dealer
Joseph Forte		Horseshoe Table Games Dealer
Frankie Bates		EVS horse shoe
KESHAV MADAI		TABLE GAMES.
JITENDRA BISIA		TABLE GAMES.
PRAKASH Joshi		TABLE GAMES