

## SB 603 Internet Gaming – Authorization and Implementation

Thank you Senator Watson and Committee Members for an opportunity to testify. My name is Dr. Deborah G. Haskins. I am testifying in opposition to SB 603.

I am President Emerita of the Maryland Council on Problem Gambling (a 501-c-3 advocacy nonprofit), an Internationally Certified Gambling Counselor, and gambling disorders leader with over 25 years of experience. Ninety-five percent of my work is training workforces how to provide disordered gambling treatment and public awareness education on the mitigation of disordered gambling harm to individuals, families, and communities.

Research well documents that 1-3% of the general population meets the criteria of a clinical diagnosis for problem gambling. Around 155.3 million persons wager online, and prevalence data well documents that many will experience negative effects of problem gambling, including psychological distress, financial devastation, loss of homes, loss of jobs, and loss of families due to the trauma and financial ruin caused by problem and disordered gambling. When persons experiences gambling-related harm, they “chase” their losses resulting in even more debt. With online gambling, a person can “chase losses” 24/7, resulting in more psychological and financial distress. Approximately 40% of help seekers have been found to be at risk of suicide. (Marionneau & Nikkinen, 2022). Research well documents that communities experiencing marginalization and oppression suffer negative harm more as many engage in “solution gambling” due to the impact of systemic racism, poverty, and lack of investment in their communities.

Jurisdictions are committed to increasing revenue by sports betting and online betting; but we lack Federal, state, and local funding sufficient for gambling treatment and prevention. The negative costs to individuals, families, and communities due to online gambling expansion will have current, future, and generational negative harms. For these reasons I have shared, please vote for an unfavorable report for SB 603.

Submitted by Dr. Deborah G. Haskins

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Maryland Council on Problem Gambling – President Emerita