

**Testimony offered on behalf of:
Marcela del Rosario Burbano de Lara**

IN OPPOSITION TO:

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

Good afternoon Mister Chairman and Honorable Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee.

My name is Marcela del Rosario Burbano de Lara and I am here to share with you my story.

I was born and raised in Ecuador and have a bachelor’s degree in Food Science from University of Santiago, Chile. As a child, I grew up in a middle-class neighborhood, but we were surrounded by people living in poverty. I saw, firsthand, how nutrition impacted a child’s ability to learn. It was my goal to create affordable yet nutritious food so the children in school could pay attention, learn, and improve their lives.

When I graduated college, my father insisted that I learn English. He brought me to Baltimore, where I had an aunt and uncle. After a few weeks, he told me that he was going back to Ecuador but that I needed to stay in the US. He insisted that I learn English.

While living with my aunt and uncle, and following my father’s advice, I enrolled in a six-month program at Baltimore City Community College to learn English.

After a several months I moved to Delaware to try to find work in my field of study. But both Kraft Foods and McCormick Spice did not hire me. While I understood everything they told me during the interview, they couldn’t understand me. They told me that I needed to improve my English before they would offer me a job.

Rather than go back to school, I decided to find any job I could. I secured my first job working as a slot attendant at Dover Downs Casino. After many years at Dover

Downs, I wanted to improve my career so I moved back to Maryland. In 2012 I applied for a job at Maryland Live!. During the interview, I was told that they loved my energy. I was hired on the spot.

I went to Maryland Live's Dealer School at Anne Arundel Community College and was part of the team that launched table games in 2013. In 2020, I was promoted to being a Manager on Duty and in 2020 I was offered the position as Director of Slots and Guest Services at our newest property in Philadelphia. I moved to Philadelphia and spent two years helping them open that property. I was then offered another promotion, this time as Director of Guest Experience back in Maryland, which is where I am now.

I love Live! casino. This job has given me the opportunity to become self-sufficient, to earn a good income and experience the American dream. Live! paid for my dealer school classes, and even another class I took at AACC: retail management. At Live!, I have full health care, a 401k with Company match, paid time off, and more. I am truly blessed.

Since joining Live, I have had four promotions, live within my means, have zero balance on my credit cards, and am now saving to buy a home.

I am very concerned about the pending legislation on internet gaming. At Live!, because I am bilingual, I routinely work with our Hispanic employees and help them navigate both work and personal issues. The launch of internet gaming would almost certainly impact the departments where most of our Hispanic employees work.....EVS, Housekeeping and Table Games.

If iGaming is approved, our business will suffer and these individuals, who are also working to achieve the American dream, will almost certainly lose their jobs. Less people coming to our property will mean less need for dealers, and less need for EVS and Housekeeping Attendants. These are hard working people, trying to improve their lives and the lives of their family. It brings me much worry to think that this Bill, if passed, would so significantly hurt my colleagues and friends.

On behalf of myself, and all others who still believe that hard work pays off, I believe that iGaming will disproportionately hurt my Hispanic colleagues. I urge you to vote against this Bill.

Thank you.

Marcela Burbano

marceburbi@me.com