



February 27, 2024

**RE: HB 1218 – State Lottery – Internet Sales Authorization and Distribution of Proceeds**

Dear Ways and Means Committee Members,

My name is Julian (Blackie) Wills and I am the President and CEO for Dash In Convenience Stores, a Maryland-based company with 40 outlets in the state employing about 800 between these outlets. We are owned by The Wills Group, Inc., a Maryland-based company founded over 98 years ago and I am part of the fourth generation of family leadership for the organization. We have community-based values and donate over \$1 million annually to our charitable partners including various food banks.

I am writing in opposition of House Bill 1248 for the following reasons:

- The Maryland Lottery Commission has not completed a study to understand the impact on its Lotte agents (i.e. brick and mortar retailers).
- Many Maryland Lottery agents rely on the commissions from these sales to maintain a profitable business. Should these monthly commissions be adversely affects, I have concerns about the future viability of some of our retail locations.
- Maryland is already proposing a reduction in the lottery commission to increase its revenues. I would think that alone should be sufficient to support the state's budget deficit.
- Internet gaming has led to increased addiction for those that gamble online. Does the state of Maryland want a state-sponsored program to potentially bankrupt some of its residents?

Thank you for your time and please advise of any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julian (Blackie) Wills III".

Julian (Blackie) Wills III  
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