



## UFCW Local 27 Testimony SB340 Internet Gaming - Authorization and Implementation

**Position: Opposition**

**Committee: Budget & Taxation      Hearing: 1/29/25**

**Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Honorable Members of the Budget & Taxation Committee:**

My name is Josh Baker, Union Representative, and I am proud to represent UFCW Local 27, which serves over 18,000 members across Maryland. On behalf of our union, I submit this testimony in strong opposition to Senate Bill 340.

SB340, which seeks to authorize the implementation of Internet gaming (iGaming) in Maryland, raises significant concerns about the long-term economic and social impacts on workers, communities, and the stability of existing gaming establishments in the state. While the bill may promise technological innovation and potential revenue growth, these supposed benefits come at a significant cost to workers and the communities they support.

### **Impact on Jobs and Workers**

The introduction of iGaming threatens to displace thousands of workers employed at Maryland's brick-and-mortar gaming facilities, including casinos and video lottery terminals. These facilities provide stable, good-paying jobs with benefits to our members and many others across the state. SB340 risks undermining these jobs by diverting revenue away from physical establishments to online platforms.

While the bill includes a provision for the \$10 million Video Lottery Facility Employee Displacement Fund, this fund is woefully inadequate to address the full scope of worker displacement. A one-time allocation cannot replace the lifetime of stability, job security, benefits, and dignity of long-term employment. Job training programs and supplemental unemployment insurance cannot guarantee re-employment in an industry that may no longer exist in its current form.

### **Economic Impact on Communities**

Maryland's gaming facilities are critical economic engines, supporting local businesses, infrastructure projects, and community programs through tax revenues and charitable contributions. The shift to online platforms will inevitably reduce foot traffic to these

establishments, leading to declines in revenue and, consequently, reduced contributions to the local economy.

This will have a ripple effect, impacting not only gaming employees but also small businesses, contractors, and community stakeholders who rely on the economic activity generated by physical gaming facilities.

### **Inadequate Safeguards for Responsible Gaming**

The accessibility of iGaming raises significant concerns about problem gambling and its associated social costs. While SB340 includes provisions for responsible gaming programs, these measures are insufficient to address the increased risks posed by 24/7 access to gaming platforms. Brick-and-mortar establishments have robust safeguards in place, including staff trained to identify and assist individuals exhibiting signs of problem gambling. These safeguards cannot be replicated effectively in an online environment, leaving vulnerable individuals and families at greater risk.

### **Conclusion**

UFCW Local 27 urges the Budget & Taxation Committee to prioritize the well-being of Maryland's workers, communities, and families by rejecting SB340. The potential revenue gains from iGaming do not outweigh the significant economic and social costs this bill would impose. Instead, we recommend that the General Assembly explore alternative approaches to modernizing the gaming industry that preserves jobs, protect communities, and promote responsible gaming practices.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this critical issue. We are committed to working with the General Assembly to develop policies that ensure a fair and equitable future for Maryland's gaming industry and its workers. I am happy to answer any questions or provide additional information as needed.

We urge an unfavorable vote on SB 340.



Josh Baker  
Union Representative

UFCW Local 27  
21 West Road, Suite 200  
Towson MD, 21204  
410-337-2700 Ext. 836