

SB 86- Online Sports Wagering - Problem Gambling Resources - Required Contact Information

Committee: Budget and Taxation

Position: PRO

Date: January 13, 2025

I am testifying in favor FAV of for Senate Bill 86

My name is Susan Belisle and I am the ex-wife of a compulsive gambler. My ex-husband Scott Coven started gambling at the age of 14. He is now 56 and still in the throes of addiction which has robbed him of millions of dollars, countless hours of sleep and destroyed his life, mental health and families. I was his second wife. Through his compulsive gambling, I have lost my marriage, my house, my retirement savings and now owe hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxes due. I knew nothing of his actions until all was lost and now have to pay the price of loving a man who has an uncontrolled disease of addiction. Gamblers are master manipulators, compulsive liars and highly intelligent individuals who will stop at nothing to place their next bet. Like me, most loved ones of a gambler do not realize until it is too late.

As a proud member of Gam Anon, I have come to learn that this disease is progressive and can never be cured, only arrested. With the increased access to online gambling and sports betting websites the addiction has become more prevalent with younger men and women. Those who are active in the GA and GAM Anon programs are convinced that this an impending epidemic

Maryland needs more resources to help individuals and families that are impacted by online sports addiction. If passed. Bill number SB 86 would require all mobile sports wagering providers to include the phone number and link to The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling on the home page of their website and mobile applications. Gambling addiction hides in the shadows. It's hard to recognize symptoms of the disease. Family and friends of gamblers are easily manipulated and conned by our gamblers because we don't have the tools, resources or information to protect ourselves.

Please vote in favor of bill SB 86

Thank you

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