

# **SB 86 FAV-Maryland Coalition of Families-Testimony**

Uploaded by: Ashley Tauler

Position: FAV



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

**Committee: Budget and Taxation**

**Date: 1/13/25**

**Position: Favorable**

**The Maryland Coalition of Families:** Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF) is a statewide nonprofit organization that provides family peer support services at no cost to families who have a loved one with a mental health, substance use, or problem gambling disorder. Using their personal experience as parents, caregivers and other loved ones, our staff provide emotional support, resource connection and systems navigation as well as support groups and educational trainings and workshops.

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Last year, we served nearly 5,000 Families, and 2% of the families served were caregivers of a loved one with problem gambling, and the numbers continue to increase.

- Here at MCF, we have seen a troubling rise in gambling behaviors among school-aged children and young adults. The stigma surrounding gambling, particularly for college-aged students, can make it difficult for young people to seek help. There has been a rising number of college students and online sports wagering. So many people see problem gambling as a financial problem, not a behavioral health one, which contributes to uncertainty about where they should turn to for help.
- Educating and providing resources such as The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling helps people get help sooner. Ensuring this resource is on the home page of these mobile applications and websites will reduce stigma and provide information for



support as soon as the homepage appears, which could help someone who may be struggling.

**Ashley Tauler**  
**Policy and Advocacy Manager**  
**Maryland Coalition of Families**  
**8950 State Route 108, Suite 223**  
**Columbia, MD 21405**

# **SB 86 Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gam**

Uploaded by: Mary Drexler

Position: FAV



January 15, 2025

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
3 West  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

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

Dear Chair Guzzone:

The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling (the Center) supports *Senate Bill 86 – Online Sports Wagering - Problem Gambling Resources - Required Contact Information*.

Maryland law currently does not have such a strong player protection for online and mobile sports bettors as is described in this bill. The Maryland State Lottery and Gaming Control Commission has promulgated responsible gambling regulations for sports betting licensees. Relevant regulations are codified in COMAR 36.10.10.03 and reads in part, “A sports wagering licensee shall ensure that the gambling assistance message is conspicuous and readable.” Each website seems to require the player to scroll down for pages before finding any responsible gambling messaging and do not link to the Center. This bill improves existing Maryland law by its prescriptive messaging and directing helpseekers to the Center’s website. The Center is the only organization in Maryland that is charged with providing a free and confidential 24-hour helpline for those struggling with problems due to gambling. When a person is directed to the Center’s website they can call or text for immediate assistance. No other organization in Maryland can help in that way.

This bill will improve upon the pre-existing responsible gambling requirements of the state. For this reason, the Center urges a favorable report on this bill. If you would like more information, please contact Mary Drexler at 667-214-2121 or [mdrexler@som.umaryland.edu](mailto:mdrexler@som.umaryland.edu).

Sincerely,

Mary Drexler, MSW

# **NCADD-MD - 2025 SB 86 FAV - Problem Gambling Hotli**

Uploaded by: Nancy Rosen-Cohen

Position: FAV



**Senate Budget & Tax Committee  
January 15, 2025**

**Senate Bill 86  
Online Sports Wagering - Problem Gambling Resources - Required  
Contact Information  
Support**

NCADD-Maryland supports Senate Bill 86. This bill will improve upon the existing responsible gambling requirements of the state and ensure that mobile sports wagering licensees prominently post information about how to get help for problem gambling.

In Maryland, it is estimated that 3.4% of adults are problem or pathological gamblers. Data shows that more and more younger people are involved in gambling activities and experiencing problems. Gambling hotlines serve as an entry point for people who think they need help. Through hotlines, callers can learn about additional resources they need to address their problems. These resources may include additional brief interventions over the phone, a connection to a peer counselor, and when the problem is severe, formal treatment.

Problem gambling hotlines are the entry point for information and help. Senate Bill 86 is a sensible measure to promote this access. We urge a favorable report.

**SB 86 - MDH - B&T - LOS .docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: State of Maryland (MD)

Position: FAV





## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

January 15, 2025

The Honorable Guy Guzzone  
Chair Budget and Taxation Committee  
3 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: Senate Bill (SB) 86 – Online Sports Wagering – Problem Gambling Resources – Required Contact Information – Letter of Support**

Dear Chair Guzzone and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) respectfully submits this letter of support for Senate Bill (SB) 86 – Online Sports Wagering – Problem Gambling Resources – Required Contact Information.

This bill requires mobile sports wagering licensees to prominently display contact information for the Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling on the homepage of their online sports wagering websites and mobile applications. Given the increase in online sports wagering, this legislation takes an important step toward raising awareness about problem gambling resources and ensuring individuals in need can quickly access support by mandating such visibility. Including a direct link to the resources provides a seamless connection to valuable assistance, reinforcing Maryland's commitment to addressing problem gambling and promoting responsible wagering practices.

SB 86 complements ongoing efforts to mitigate the risks of gambling addiction, particularly in an era where online and mobile platforms make sports wagering increasingly accessible. By emphasizing prevention and outreach, the bill aligns with the Department's mission to safeguard the health and well-being of Maryland residents.

I hope this information is helpful. If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs, at [sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov](mailto:sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, MD, MPH  
Secretary

# **Susan Belisle-SB 86-Testimony .pdf**

Uploaded by: Susan Belisle

Position: FAV

## **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

Susan Belilse  
604 Admiral Drive Apt 448  
Annapolis, MD 21401

# **SB 86 - Support with Amendments.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jennifer Beskid

Position: FWA

# Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency

Wes Moore, Governor • John Martin, Director



Montgomery Park Business Center  
1800 Washington Blvd., Ste. 330  
Baltimore, Maryland 21230

Tel: 410-230-8800  
TTY users call Maryland Relay  
www.mdlottery.com

**DATE:** January 13, 2025  
**BILL NO:** Senate Bill 86  
**BILL TITLE:** Sports Wagering – Problem Gambling Resources – Required Contact Information  
**COMMITTEE:** Budget and Taxation  
**POSITION:** Support

The Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency supports Senate Bill 86 - Sports Wagering – Problem Gambling Resources – Required Contact Information.

## **Bill Summary:**

Senate Bill 86 proposes sports wagering licensees in Maryland prominently display language that would direct an individual seeking resources for problem gambling to a phone number or online resource that could be accessed by clicking a link on the licensee’s mobile application or online sports wagering website.

## **Background:**

The Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency licenses 11 sports wagering operators who provide sports wagering in the State. Once a user has met the requirements to create an account, any time the user signs into the account a landing page is displayed. Currently every licensee’s landing page provides information for users to access links or a phone number to provide resources for responsible gaming in Maryland.

## **Rationale:**

Senate Bill 86 would codify this current best practice. The Agency does suggest the following amendments to Senate Bill 86.

### Amendment No. 1

On page 2, line 7, after “THE” strike “HOMEPAGE”, insert “LANDING PAGE.”

### Amendment No. 2

On page 2, line 10, after “GAMBLER”, insert “OR SOME COMPARABLE LANGUAGE APPROVED BY THE COMMISSION”

MLGCA respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 86.