



March 26, 2025

Ways and Means Committee
130 Taylor House Office Building
131 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB 310 – Education - Youth Suicide Prevention School Program - Revisions –
Letter of Support

Dear Chair Atterbeary:

This letter is in support of SB 310, which alters the requirements of the Youth Suicide Prevention School Program to increase pupil awareness of the relationship between gambling and youth suicide.

The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling (the Center) is a program of the University of Maryland School of Medicine that promotes healthy and informed choices regarding gambling and problem gambling. Problem gambling is inherently a mental health issue, as it has been classified by the American Psychological Association as an addiction.ⁱ High school students are especially susceptible to problem gambling, with the National Council on Problem Gambling stating that 4-6% of high schoolers are considered addicted to gambling, which is a rate that is double that of adults.ⁱⁱ While mental health issues are common risk factors for problem gambling, they can also be a result of problem gambling as well – emphasized by the fact that adolescents with gambling problems have been found to have significantly higher rates of suicidal ideation and attempts than non-gamblers and social gamblers.ⁱⁱⁱ

We urge a favorable report on SB 310. If you would like more information, please contact Mary Drexler at mdrexler@som.umaryland.edu.

Sincerely,

Mary Drexler, MSW

ⁱ <https://dictionary.apa.org/gambling-disorder>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/states-tackle-teenage-gambling-as-sports-betting-grows/2022/07>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://kmb.camh.ca/ggtu/knowledge-translation/youth>