



Voices of Hope, Inc

Bill: HB 0758 Problem Gambling-Authorized Uses of Funds-Alterations

FROM: Rogelio Valera

POSITION: Favorable

DATE: February 17, 2026

I, Rogelio Valera respectfully request this committee issue a favorable report on House Bill 0758

HB0758 modernizes Maryland's approach to addressing addiction by expanding how State and federal funds may be used to support individuals experiencing problem gambling and related behavioral health challenges. The bill broadens the purposes for which the Secretary of Health may award grants or enter into agreements, ensuring that funding can support a wider range of evidence-based services that meet people where they are.

Importantly, HB0758 also updates how the Maryland Department of Health may utilize the **Problem Gambling Fund** by allowing reimbursement for **peer-led behavioral health services**. This includes support provided by trained peers with lived experience who are assisting individuals receiving treatment or participating in prevention programs related to problem gambling. By recognizing peers as a reimbursable, evidence-informed component of care, the bill strengthens early intervention, reduces stigma, and improves engagement in

services.

HB0758 reflects the reality that addiction does not exist in silos. Gambling-related harm often co-occurs with substance use, mental health challenges, financial instability, and family disruption. Expanding funding flexibility and peer support reimbursement will allow community-based organizations that support recovery from addiction to deliver more comprehensive, cost-effective, and person-centered services—ultimately improving outcomes for individuals, families, and communities across Maryland.

For these reasons, I am requesting this committee issue a favorable report for HB0758



February, 17th, 2026

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