

Testimony of The Cordish Companies and Live! Casino Hotel Maryland

Presented by Mark Stewart, General Counsel

In SUPPORT of HB 518

Ways and Means Committee Hearing

February 12, 2026

On behalf of The Cordish Companies and Live! Casino Hotel Maryland, I respectfully submit this written testimony **in support** of HB 518, which enhances problem gambling and college athlete protections in relation to sports betting, particularly online sports betting.

A growing and loud chorus of voices from academia to news outlets to public health experts has given voice to concern over the negative impacts of online gambling:

- News agencies have opined or published exposes on online gambling, including The Washington Post, CBS News, The Atlantic, The New Republic, Bloomberg, The Wall Street Journal, 60 Minutes, The Baltimore Sun and more;
- Public health and problem gambling experts, such as Shekhar Saxena, Professor of Global Health at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, have explained that “Online gambling can be 10 times more harmful than other forms of gambling;”¹
- Numerous universities, such as Northwestern University, University of Kansas, BYU, UCLA and more, have issued reports detailing the negative financial impacts of online gambling.² These studies found that the negative impacts of online gambling are especially harmful to low-income gamblers and vulnerable households; and
- The National Problem Gambling Council reports a 30% increase in the risk of gambling addiction that coincides with the expansion of online gambling over the past three years.³

The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling revealed in a recent study that 51% of Marylanders who engage in online sports betting experience problem gambling harms.⁴ 20%

¹ *Deseret News*, “Online gambling: the stakes for public health” (Jan. 24, 2025).

² *Gambling Away Stability: Sports Betting’s Impact on Vulnerable Households*, Scott R. Baker, Justin Balthrop, Mark Johnson, Jason Krotter, Kevin Pisciotto (June 30, 2024); *Online Gambling Policy Effects on Tax Revenue and Irresponsible Gaming*, Wayne J. Taylor, Daniel M. McCarthy, Kenneth C. Wilbur (June 6, 2024); *How gambling affects the brain and who is most vulnerable to addiction*, Emily Sohn (July 2023); *The Financial Consequences of Legalized Sports Gambling*, Brett Hollenbeck, Poet Larsen, Daivde Proserpio (July 23, 2024).

³ See *supra* n. 1.

⁴ <https://gamblingharm.org/maryland-problem-sports-betting/>

experience the most severe forms of harm. The study showed that these harms are disproportionately felt by young people, particularly males, minority populations, and vulnerable households.

Approximately 99% of sports bets placed in Maryland are made online. HB 518 would bolster the State's problem gambling measures and encourage a more responsible gaming experience for Marylanders. While the bill is an excellent first step at implementing safeguards and needed limitations on online gambling, we encourage consideration of additional measures. Specifically, the prohibition of in-game betting, limitations on the amounts of bets, and slowing down the pace of betting activities would all be impactful additional measures. We support a favorable report on HB 518.