



March 5, 2026

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

RE: HB 1255 – Expansion of Commercial Gaming - Internet Gaming
Referendum – Oppose

Dear Chair Wilkins:

This letter is in opposition to *HB 1255 – Expansion of Commercial Gaming - Internet Gaming Referendum*. HB 1255 calls for a voter referendum on the legalization of iGaming.

Currently, only eight states have legalized iGaming (Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, West Virginia). iGaming is one of the most addictive activities available.ⁱ Studies have shown that continuous access to gambling makes individuals more prone to developing compulsive behaviors, as they lack natural “breaks” that physical casinos often provide.ⁱⁱ

The ease of access of iGaming is expected to lead to more health and emotional difficulties that come with gambling disorders including substance abuse, depression, and increased suicide rates. We urge an unfavorable report on HB 1255. If you would like more information, please contact Heather Eshleman at heshleman@som.umaryland.edu or (667) 214-2120.

Sincerely,

Heather Eshleman, MPH
Director of Operations
Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling
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ⁱ Morgan State University, Center for Data Analytics and Sports Gaming Research, “The Socio-economic Impact of Legalizing Interactive Gaming (iGaming) and Online Betting in Maryland.” February 14, 2024.

ⁱⁱ <https://immunizenevada.org/online-gambling-and-its-psychological-impact/>