



## MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

*Affiliated with the National AFL-CIO*

**Donna S. Edwards**  
*President*

**Samuel Epps, IV**  
*Secretary-Treasurer*

📞 410.280.2233

📠 410.280.2956

📍 7 School Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401-2096

### **HB 1255 - Expansion of Commercial Gaming - Internet Gaming Referendum**

#### **House Ways and Means Committee**

**March 5, 2026**

**OPPOSE**

**Donna S. Edwards**

**President**

#### **Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Madame Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong opposition to HB 1255. On behalf of 700 affiliated unions, I offer the following comments.

The referendum question posed in this bill is misleading and fails to provide essential information to Maryland voters to make an informed decision about a major expansion of commercial gambling. There is a significant difference between sports betting and iGaming; sports betting is a game you play against other people, while iGaming is a game you play against the house. The question, “Do you favor the expansion of commercial gaming in the State of Maryland to authorize Internet gaming for dedicated purposes, including the funding of public education,” suggests a simple choice of whether or not the voter supports schools, but does not highlight the full scope of the consequences that come with legalizing online gaming.

Given this question, voters would not know that this referendum would open the door to 24/7 online gambling access, thus increasing the risk of addiction, financial harm, and mass job loss. Importantly, it also does not inform voters that the implementation details, regulatory framework, consumer protections, and revenue distribution would all be determined after the referendum—this leaves them to vote in the blind.

Maryland voters deserve transparency on what they are voting for, and this bill does not deliver that. This referendum bill omits the significant social, economic, and regulatory ramifications of legalizing online gaming. The State should not put forth a referendum that fails to fully educate the public on the risks and long-term consequences of this expansion.

For these reasons, we strongly urge an unfavorable vote on HB 1255.



[unions@mddclabor.org](mailto:unions@mddclabor.org)



[www.mddclabor.org](http://www.mddclabor.org)



[facebook.com/mddcaflcio](https://facebook.com/mddcaflcio)



[instagram.com/md\\_dc\\_aflcio](https://instagram.com/md_dc_aflcio)