



February 5, 2026

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

RE: HB 295 – Gaming - Prohibition on Interactive Games and Revenue From
Illegal Markets – Letter of Support

Dear Chair Wilkins:

This letter is in support of HB 295, which, in part, makes online sweepstakes games illegal in Maryland.

Online sweepstakes companies claim that sweepstakes are not gambling because players are not making a purchase for the chance to win real money and prizes. However, they effectively function like all other forms of gambling and have the same addictive potential. States are catching onto the damage of online sweepstakes and are increasingly filing lawsuits against these operators; for example, an online sweepstakes operator, VGW, faces multiple lawsuits alleging it is operating an illegal gambling website. Maryland has not filed any lawsuits, but the Lottery has sent cease-and-desist letters to multiple operators informing them their websites were illegal and demanding they block Marylanders from accessing their sites. Operators have been slow to respond, if at all.

This bill will give the state more recourse against these illegal operations. We urge a favorable report on HB 295. If you would like more information, please contact Heather Eshleman at heshleman@som.umaryland.edu or (667) 214-2120.

Sincerely,

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