



February 19, 2026

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

RE: HB 731 – Fantasy Competitions - Alterations and Voluntary Exclusion Requirements

Dear Chair Wilkins:

The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling supports *HB 731 – Fantasy Competitions - Alterations and Voluntary Exclusion Requirements* with amendments.

Gambling can be defined as any betting or wagering, for self or others, whether for money or not, no matter how slight or insignificant, where the outcome is uncertain or depends upon chance or “skill.”<sup>1</sup> The Center supports this bill’s requirement that each fantasy competition operator must include a statement on obtaining assistance with real-money gaming problems on the operator’s portal, website, or application, and all marketing material. Maryland does not define fantasy competitions as betting, wagering, or gambling and yet recognizes that it is a form of “real money gaming” that is addictive. The Center suggests the following amendment in recognition that participating in a fantasy competition is a gambling activity and deserves the same level of awareness as all other forms of gambling.

On page 3, in line 22, strike “**DOES NOT CONSTITUTE**” and substitute “**CONSTITUTES**”.

On page 6, in line 25, strike “(1)”.

On page 7, strike in their entirety lines 1 through 2, inclusive.

According to the most recent Maryland Gambling Prevalence Study, 32.1% of Marylanders who gambled in daily fantasy sports and 16.1% of Marylanders who gambled in yearly fantasy sports met the criteria for disordered gambling.<sup>2</sup> This bill requires any prize or award won by an individual on the self-exclusion list to be transferred to the Problem Gambling Fund (PGF). While the Center supports requiring fantasy competition operators to contribute to the PGF, it

<sup>1</sup> Gamblers Anonymous, <https://gamblersanonymous.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/March-2025-2.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Statewide Gambling Prevalence in Maryland: 2024, <https://www.mdproblemgambling.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/2024-MD-Gambling-Report.pdf>.



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has long been the Center's position that all licensees should be required to contribute a percentage of their proceeds to the Problem Gambling Fund, and we would request the same in this bill.

If you would like more information, please contact Heather Eshleman at [heshleman@som.umaryland.edu](mailto:heshleman@som.umaryland.edu).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Heather Eshleman".

Heather Eshleman, MPH

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