



METROPOLITAN BALTIMORE COUNCIL AFL-CIO Unions

**HB 1343 Internet Gaming - Authorization and Implementation
Ways and Means Committee
March 5th, 2026
Unfavorable**

To: Chair & members of the House Ways and Means Committee

From: Courtney Jenkins, President, Metropolitan Baltimore Council AFL-CIO Unions

Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Courtney Jenkins, President of the Metro Baltimore AFL-CIO, representing thousands of union members and working families. I stand in strong opposition to House Bill 1343, which seeks to expand Internet gaming in Maryland by authorizing and regulating online casino-style gambling statewide. While proponents frame this proposal as a revenue generator for education and other state programs, it fails to address the real cost to Maryland's workforce, especially the union members in our gaming and hospitality sectors.

HB 1343 will accelerate the shift away from brick-and-mortar gaming jobs. These jobs are unionized, provide good wages, benefits, career advancement, and are deeply rooted in our communities. The bill authorizes online gaming operations that compete directly with traditional casino floor operations, leading to reduced foot traffic at physical facilities and threatening the employment of thousands of skilled dealers, technicians, security personnel, food and beverage workers, and other support staff who depend on live gaming venues for their livelihoods. Unlike online platforms, which require minimal onsite labor, traditional facilities support real jobs that contribute to our local economy and sustain families. You can see this in Michigan, when within 5 years there was a 37% decline in unionized staff.

Although HB 1343 does establish some licensing and regulatory structures, and even creates a small Video Lottery Facility Employee Displacement Fund, these measures are insufficient to address the long term loss of work and economic stability for workers whose jobs will be displaced by igaming. The displacement fund is limited in scope and duration, while the scale of job loss could be ongoing and widespread. This legislation places the interests of online gaming companies and distant investors above the needs of working people in Maryland.

Moreover, the bill's provisions for workforce development planning and diversity goals do not guarantee union jobs or collective bargaining rights, and they fall far short of protecting existing



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workers whose jobs are at risk. Igaming platforms will operate with far fewer employees and limited labor standards, further eroding the middle class jobs that unions have fought to secure over decades.

For these reasons, the Metro Baltimore AFL-CIO respectfully urges an unfavorable report on House Bill 1343. We believe that public policy should strengthen, not weaken, employment opportunities for union members and working families. This bill does the opposite.

Thank you for your consideration.

Courtney Jenkins
President
Metropolitan Baltimore Council AFL-CIO