



**UFCW LOCAL  
1994 MCGEO**

**Gino Renne, President  
Lisa Blackwell-Brown, Secretary-Treasurer  
Lisa Titus, Recorder**

**A VOICE FOR WORKING AMERICA**

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

**HB 1343 – Internet Gaming - Authorization and Implementation**

Ways and Means Committee

**March 5, 2026**

**Oppose**

Gino Renne, President, UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Gino Renne, and I am proud to serve as President of UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO. On behalf of our members and the broader labor community, I am here to urge you to reject both HB 1255 and HB 1343, which would allow for the legalization of iGaming in Maryland.

Nearly two decades ago, when casino gambling was first authorized in Maryland, Montgomery County’s Senators and Delegates took a principled stand against bringing casinos into our community. That position was reaffirmed in 2012 when the General Assembly approved a sixth casino and once again rejected placing slot machines and table games in Montgomery County. Today, proposals to legalize iGaming would effectively put a casino on every smartphone — in every home, at every kitchen table, and in every pocket. I respectfully ask you to uphold the same commitment demonstrated in the past and say no to this expansion of gambling.

The stakes are not theoretical. Maryland’s six brick-and-mortar casinos currently support approximately 16,000 jobs — many of them well-paying union jobs that allow workers to support their families and contribute to their communities.

Experience with the implementation of iGaming in other states gives us serious cause for concern. After Pennsylvania authorized iGaming, thousands of casino jobs were lost. Independent projections suggest Maryland could lose more than 4,000 jobs if online casino gambling is approved. At a time when working families are already facing economic

uncertainty and federal workforce reductions, advancing legislation that risks eliminating stable, family-supporting jobs sends the wrong message.

Beyond the economic impact, the social costs are deeply troubling. Legalizing iGaming would provide 24-hour access to slot machines and table games on every phone, dramatically increasing the risk of gambling addiction and related harms. Research consistently shows that online gambling is more addictive than in-person gaming because of its speed, accessibility, and isolation. A recent Maryland-based analysis estimates that the social costs of iGaming could total hundreds of millions of dollars annually, with vulnerable and minority communities disproportionately affected. We must ask ourselves whether projected revenue is worth the long-term social and economic damage.

On behalf of UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO and working families across our state, I respectfully urge you to reject HB 1255 and HB 1343. Maryland has previously drawn a clear line on expanding casino gambling. I ask you to draw that line again and stand with workers, families, and communities by voting no on iGaming.