

Testimony of The Cordish Companies and Live! Casino Hotel Maryland

Presented by Mark Stewart, General Counsel

In OPPOSITION to HB 75

Ways and Means Committee Hearing

January 29, 2026

On behalf of The Cordish Companies and Live! Casino Hotel Maryland, I respectfully submit this written testimony **in opposition to** HB 75, which would eliminate the current prohibition on video lottery operator licensees and certain related persons making campaign finance contributions. According to the Pew Research Center, the public's trust in government and public institutions is at an all-time low.¹ Indeed, a December 2025 report from the Center shows just 17% of those surveyed agreeing that the federal government will do what is right.

Upon the authorization of licensed gaming in Maryland, the General Assembly included the subject limitations in the Election Law to protect the integrity of the governmental process and promote public confidence in the same. While the gaming industry in general has shed its historical origins, the amounts of money involved in the industry that could be injected into the political process remain a concern, whether perceived or actual, to the integrity of public institutions and processes. In fact, the flaw in Maryland law is not the application of the contribution limitation to video lottery operator licensees, but the substantial loophole that exists for all other gaming and wagering related licensees of the Maryland Lottery and Gaming Commission. Sports betting licensees, sports betting operators, fantasy contest licensees, and all similarly licensed entities (and applicants for the same) involved in gaming or wagering, regardless of the oversight agency, should be subject to the limitations in existing law.

Protect public integrity and close the loophole in current law by extending the existing campaign contribution prohibition to all appropriate entities and persons. We respectfully request an unfavorable report on HB 75.

¹ <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2025/12/04/public-trust-in-government-1958-2025/>