



March 3, 2026

Chair Jheanelle K. Wilkins  
Ways and Means Committee  
130 Taylor House Office Building  
131 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: HB1255 Expansion of Commercial Gaming - Internet Gaming Referendum

Dear Chair Wilkins,

United Food and Commercial Workers Local 27 is writing to express our objection to internet casino gaming (iGaming) in the State of Maryland. We believe any bills or legislation on this topic will adversely impact hard working members of the community, create social ills, and reduce jobs at Maryland's existing casinos. We oppose the legislation and any related referendum.

United Food and Commercial Workers Local 27 represents of over 18,000 members in Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia. Our mission is to secure a living wage, good benefits and a positive work environment for our members.

iGaming is a jobs killer. According to a study by Sage Policy Group, led by former chair of the Maryland Economic Development Commission Anirban Basu, **iGaming could lead to the loss of 2,700 jobs at Maryland's brick and mortar casinos.** As Sage Policy notes, these jobs are often filled with union members and they provide living wages and comprehensive benefits.

According to the Sage Policy Group, **iGaming will result in an annual \$65 million decline in statewide personal income for Marylanders.** Unjustly, members of Maryland's labor force who lack a college degree will bear the brunt of these losses because of the accessibility of casino jobs to workers with a high school diploma or less.

The consensus that iGaming = job destruction is backed up by what we are seeing in other states.

- ***iGaming is presently illegal in 43 States.***
- ***Pennsylvania saw thousands of casino jobs disappear since the launch of iGaming according to Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board reports.***
- ***New Jersey found that iGaming decreased the total amount of money that employees received in wages by about \$900 million. Similarly, nearly 16,000 New Jersey gaming jobs have been lost due to iGaming, according to a November 2023 study by NERA Economic Consulting for The Campaign for Fairer Gambling.***
- ***Recently, New York Governor Kathy Hochul refused to include iGaming in her proposed budget because of concerns over job losses and the negative impact on union jobs, according to public reports.***

Beyond the crushing loss of jobs, iGaming will result in a myriad of problems for Maryland, its citizens and its gaming industry and workers. With dramatic decreases in patron visitation caused by iGaming, the state's brick and mortar casinos will have no incentive to keep investing in and expanding their facilities. This will hurt construction workers, as well as gaming and ancillary workers that would operate the new hotels, restaurants, shopping and entertainment venues and other developments. Casino-ancillary development like Warner Street Entertainment District (Horseshoe Casino in Baltimore City; Arundel Shopping Complex (Live! Casino and Hotel in Anne Arundel County); and Great Wolf Lodge (Hollywood Casino in Perryville) would have no incentive to continue casino expansions.

Sadly, iGaming's harms do not stop with economic damage but also include a very high human cost. The American Psychological Association has described iGaming as "one of the most addictive activities available." 60 Minutes (February 4, 2024, edition) featured a segment on the dangers and massive addiction problems coming from mobile betting on phones. Since the launch of iGaming, calls to problem gambling helplines in New Jersey and Pennsylvania have increased 225% and 140%, respectively. And Les Bernal, National Director of Stop Predatory Gambling and the Campaign for Gambling-Free Kids has called iGaming the "gambling equivalent of fentanyl" for today's youth.

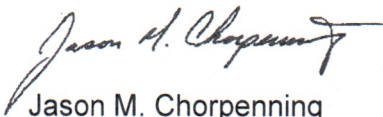
Approximately 16,000 gaming industry workers live in the Free State, and most are union members. Their employers, Maryland's six brick and mortar casinos, have produced billions of dollars in tax revenue for the State, billions of dollars in investment in their facilities and hundreds of millions of dollars of local share funds for their communities. Much of this will be sacrificed if iGaming is legalized.

Support for iGaming is the equivalent of being against union jobs. We urge you to oppose any legislation to authorize iGaming or a referendum on iGaming.

We are prepared to meet with you, or your designees, to further emphasize the point: iGaming will hurt hard working Marylanders and reduce jobs.

Thank you for your consideration of our views on this important matter.

In solidarity,



Jason M. Chorpenning  
UFCW Local 27, President

Cc Nelson L. Hill  
VP/Executive Assistant to the President