



## **State Lottery and Gaming Control Commission - Authority to Conduct Studies on the Use of Emerging Technology - Collaboration**

Position: Support  
Hearing Date: February 5, 2026  
Committee: Ways & Means

**The Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF)** is a statewide nonprofit organization that provides family peer support services at no cost to families who have a child or other loved one with a mental health, substance use, or problem gambling disorder. As experienced caregivers, we provide support, guidance, and hope to people who love or care for someone with a behavioral health challenge and advocate to improve the systems they rely on.

MCF supports efforts to better understand how emerging technology can be used to create a safe and transparent gambling environment that prohibits young people from engaging in gambling activities before the age of 21 and protects those of legal age from identity theft or other security breaches. According to the Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling, young people who gamble before the age of 21 are four times more likely to develop gambling disorders later in life, are more likely to engage in other risky behaviors such as alcohol and/or drug use, have higher instances of anxiety and depression, suffer poor academic performance, and have strained relationships with family members.

Exploring emerging technologies is a critical first step to protecting young people from the harmful effects of activities that can lead to a problem gambling disorder. But these technologies also carry risks that could be particularly harmful to young adults interacting with gaming platforms. While we support identifying technology that would support age verification to prevent illegal gaming and the use of facial recognition and biometrics to protect against identity theft, we would caution that these technologies also carry a responsibility to ensure that any data collected about young people using these digital tools is safeguarded, used only for its intended purposes, and provide consumers with full transparency so they can make informed decisions about their participation and interaction with these tools.

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