



**House Ways & Means Committee
February 12, 2026**

House Bill 518 - Gaming - Problem Gambling and College Athlete Protections

Support with Amendment

The Maryland Chapter of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence supports House Bill 518. We support the requirement proposed in the bill for the State Lottery and Gaming Control Commission to provide contact information of individuals that request to be placed on the voluntary exclusion list to the Maryland Center for Excellence on Problem Gambling. This means a person would automatically be contacted by a Peer Recovery Support Specialist, a person with lived experience who is in active recovery from gambling addiction and has been certified as a peer. Peer support is an effective, evidence-based practice that supports each a person’s chances of success in meeting and exceeding their goals.

In addition, NCADD-Maryland supports the bill’s proposal to raise the age to participate in fantasy sports from 18 to 21 years of age. This brings this form of gambling in line with other forms of legal gambling. Early exposure to gambling is linked to a higher likelihood of problems later in life, so being consistent with the state’s minimum age is good policy. We also believe the “grandfathering” provision that would exempt younger players who currently have fantasy competition accounts should be removed. Raising the age is viewed as a preventative measure to reduce gambling-related crime, social problems, and financial issues among young people. Our amendment would simply strike in their entirety lines 31 through 34 on page 3.

With this amendment, we urge a favorable report on House Bill 518.