



METROPOLITAN BALTIMORE COUNCIL AFL-CIO Unions

HB 1255 Expansion of Commercial Gaming - Internet Gaming Referendum
Ways and Means Committee
March 5th, 2026
Unfavorable

To: Chair & members of the House Ways and Means Committee

From: Courtney Jenkins, President, Metropolitan Baltimore Council AFL-CIO Unions

Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Courtney Jenkins, President of the Metro Baltimore AFL-CIO, representing thousands of union members and working families across our region. On behalf of our labor community, I stand in strong opposition to House Bill 1255.

While this proposal may be presented as a modernization effort or a revenue opportunity, it fails to fully account for the long term consequences for working people whose livelihoods are tied to the affected industry. Time and again, we have seen policies framed as innovation or efficiency lead to the erosion of stable, unionized employment in favor of models that rely on fewer workers, lower labor standards, and weaker worker protections.

Union jobs are not just line items in a fiscal note; they are careers that provide family-sustaining wages, healthcare, retirement security, and pathways into the middle class. When legislation restructures an industry in ways that reduce brick and mortar storefronts, centralize services, or shift work to models that require fewer employees, the direct result is job loss, reduced hours, and downward pressure on wages. The workers impacted are not abstract numbers, they are Maryland residents who contribute to their communities, pay taxes, and support local businesses. You can see this in Michigan, when within 5 years there was a 37% decline in unionized staff.

Even when legislation includes regulatory structures or limited mitigation funds, those measures rarely offset the broader economic impact of lost jobs. Temporary funds or transition language cannot replace permanent, good paying union positions. Nor do such provisions guarantee collective bargaining rights, labor standards, or long-term employment stability. Once jobs are eliminated or significantly reduced, they are unlikely to return.

The Metro Baltimore AFL CIO believes that public policy should prioritize strengthening industries that provide high quality union employment, not incentivize shifts that weaken them. We must



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carefully consider whether this bill protects workers, preserves existing union jobs, and ensures that economic growth benefits Maryland families, not just corporate interests or out of state entities.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge an unfavorable report on House Bill 1255. Maryland's working families deserve policies that build and protect good union jobs, not legislation that risks undermining them.

Thank you for your consideration.

Courtney Jenkins
President
Metropolitan Baltimore Council AFL-CIO