

**Chair and Members of the Committee,**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Eric Eitel, and I respectfully urge you to vote **no on HB 1255**.

My concerns center on transparency, timing of education funding, and whether voters are being given the full picture.

First, the way the referendum is written strongly implies that gaming tax revenues will be immediately and meaningfully directed to fund education. While I fully support the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and believe it is a worthy investment, the language of the referendum does not clearly communicate that, in the short term, only 1% of proceeds would go toward education. Most Maryland voters will not see substantial education benefits until the program matures years down the road.

That distinction matters. When voters are asked to approve expanded gaming under the banner of funding education, they deserve to clearly understand how much money will go to education, and when.

Second, I am concerned that many voters may not be fully informed about the broader economic and social impacts of expanding gaming. Independent analysis comparing states that have adopted iGaming shows potential job displacement in brick-and-mortar casinos and ripple effects beyond gaming employees. These are real Maryland jobs held by Maryland residents.

There are also serious concerns about problem gambling and youth protection. Online access removes many of the in-person safeguards that currently exist in Maryland casinos. Increased accessibility increases risk, particularly for adolescents and vulnerable individuals.

Maryland has a thoughtful and engaged electorate. But before placing this question on the ballot, the information presented must be clear, complete, and transparent about both the benefits and the risks.

For those reasons, I respectfully ask you to vote **no on HB 1255**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.