

Testimony of The Cordish Companies and Live! Casino Hotel Maryland

Presented by Mark Stewart, General Counsel

In SUPPORT of HB 1409

Ways and Means Committee Hearing

March 3, 2026

On behalf of The Cordish Companies and Live! Casino Hotel Maryland, I respectfully submit this written testimony **in support** of HB 1409, which calls upon additional forms of gambling authorized by the State (sports betting and fantasy sports) to contribute their share to efforts combatting problem gambling. Even more importantly, HB 1409 recognizes the vital need for a comprehensive prevalence study dedicated specifically to mobile gambling in Maryland.

Early in the days of casino gaming in Maryland, the General Assembly showed great foresight in forming the Maryland Alliance for Responsible Gaming (MARG). Through MARG, the House of Delegates, the Senate, the Department of Health, all the State’s casinos and other stakeholders have worked collaboratively and consistently to combat problem gambling. Regulations and procedures were put in place to require safeguards against problem and underage gambling at in-person casinos, including prohibitions on gambling with credit cards, prohibitions on gambling while drunk or under the influence, strict ID checking protocols, and more.

Mobile sports betting had a delayed implementation in Maryland, and yet, presently, over 97% of sports bets in the State are placed online. While the Maryland Center of Excellence has yet to conduct a full report on mobile sports betting, it is already seeing a significant increase in call volumes and problems among young people. In the last 3 years, Maryland’s 1-800 number “has seen a spike in calls from 18-20 year olds, and calls from 21-25 year olds have tripled.”¹ Before online sports gambling, “the Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling got roughly 3 requests a year from educators requesting presentations on sports betting addiction.

¹ *USA Today*, “Inside the High-Stakes, High-Risk World of Sports Betting and How It’s Gripping Young Men” (May 13, 2025).

Now, [it] gets 3 per month from high school teachers and college professors,” according to Heather Eshleman, Prevention Manager with the Maryland Center.² Results from a recent survey conducted by the Center demonstrate that further study is needed:

- 51% of online sports bettors are disordered or at risk gamblers;
- 66% of disordered online sports bettors are male;
- African American and Latino individuals are more likely to suffer from disordered online sports betting; and
- Much like the experience in iGaming states, the rate of disordered online sports gambling in Maryland is nearly 3x the national average.³

The Center has explained that the State does not yet have the data to show, and does not know, the full scope of the problem that may be facing Marylanders. It takes time for problem gambling behavior to manifest itself, people to accept that they have a problem and, ultimately, to seek help from the Center or a 1-800 Helpline. Indeed, over the past 12-18 months, there has been a growing amount of data and concern over the negative impacts of online gambling, including mobile sports betting:

- A chorus of news agencies have opined or published exposes on online gambling, including The Washington Post, CBS News, The Atlantic, The New Republic, Bloomberg, The Wall Street Journal, 60 Minutes, The Baltimore Sun and more;
- Public health and problem gambling experts, such as Shekhar Saxena, Professor of Global Health at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, have explained that “Online gambling can be 10 times more harmful than other forms of gambling;”⁴
- Numerous universities, such as Northwestern University, University of Kansas, BYU, UCLA and more, have issued reports detailing the negative financial impacts of online gambling.⁵ These studies found that the negative impacts of

² *Id.*

³ <https://www.medschool.umaryland.edu/news/2025/new-survey-shows-rising-rates-of-disordered-gambling-among-marylanders-since-legalization-of-online-sports-betting-.html>

⁴ *Deseret News*, “Online gambling: the stakes for public health” (Jan. 24, 2025).

⁵ *Gambling Away Stability: Sports Betting’s Impact on Vulnerable Households*, Scott R. Baker, Justin Balthrop, Mark Johnson, Jason Krotter, Kevin Pisciotta (June 30, 2024); *Online Gambling Policy Effects on Tax Revenue and Irresponsible Gaming*, Wayne J. Taylor, Daniel M. McCarthy, Kenneth C. Wilbur (June 6, 2024); *How gambling affects the brain and who is most vulnerable to addiction*, Emily Sohn (July 2023); *The Financial Consequences of Legalized Sports Gambling*, Brett Hollenbeck, Poet Larsen, Daivde Proserpio (July 23, 2024).

online gambling are especially harmful to low-income gamblers and vulnerable households; and

- The National Problem Gambling Council reports a 30% increase in the risk of gambling addiction that coincides with the expansion of online gambling over the past three years.⁶

Given this, HB 1409 rightly calls for a comprehensive mobile gambling prevalence study based upon multiple years' worth of data to be completed by July 1, 2031. Such a study will provide the granular data needed to understand the full scope and prevalence of mobile sports betting implications. We support public policy being based on strong data analysis and urge the Committee to favorably report out HB 1409. Thank you.

⁶ *See supra* n. 4.