



HB 46 - Sports Wagering - Gambling Prevention Technology Pilot Program – Establishment

Position: Support
Date: January 29, 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 HB46 because it addresses the increasing prevalence of problem gambling disorders among college students. According to the Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling, 67% of students living on college campuses are bettors and tend to bet at a higher frequency. In Maryland, 20% of those who bet on mobile sports apps have a gambling disorder versus 11% of those who bet on sports at in-person locations. 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 technologies that limit a young person's exposure to and use of mobile betting apps is a viable first step to mitigating the impact of these platforms. The pilot programs at Bowie State and Morgan State proposed in HB46 establish safe zones in which young people can find temporary sanctuary from the constant onslaught of advertising from and ready access to mobile betting apps. These pilot programs will provide valuable insights and data regarding the effectiveness of prevention and early intervention strategies aimed at helping young people whose gambling behaviors are negatively impacting their day-to-day functioning, academic performance, relationships, and health and wellbeing.

Karen L. Duffy, MA
Executive Director
Maryland Coalition of Families
kduffy@mdcoalition.org
240.885.2549