

To: Members of House Ways and Means Committee

From: Stacey Wells, Constituent (Rockville, MD)

Re: Support - HB 518 - Gaming - Problem Gambling and College Athlete Protections

Members of the House Ways and Means Committee,

I am submitting written testimony to support HB 518 - Gaming - Problem Gambling and College Athlete Protections and to urge the committee to move forward with a Favorable Report on the bill.

HB 518 addresses the increase in problem gambling and gambling addictions that has been encouraged by targeted advertising and lack of player protections. This bill will strengthen player protections by prohibiting use of credit cards in mobile sports betting, refer more people to free counseling, and prohibit email marketing to players who have temporarily suspended their accounts.

Since the legalization of sports betting in Maryland, there has been a massive influx of gambling advertisements and wide access to Marylanders. Nearly all sports networks and leagues are sponsored by online sports betting platforms (ex: DraftKings), and these apps make it incredibly easy for people to become addicted to gambling, especially with the use of targeted notifications, data mining, and direct linked access to a credit card or bank account.

This easy-access, unregulated industry is – and will continue to – negatively impact Marylanders if the industry remains unaddressed. Problem gamblers have one of the highest suicide rates for those battling addictions and gambling can ruin individuals' financial futures. With an ongoing cost-of-living crisis and the constant pummeling of advertisements, Marylanders may feel like gambling their money on the slim chance of profit as a viable option, and in doing so, can do irreparable harm to themselves and those around them.

This is an issue that will only become more dire as time goes on and I urge the House Ways and Means Committee to support and report favorable on HB 518.

Members of the committee can also reference fact-based materials, such as the [Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling](#), and investigative journalism on this issue, such as in [The Harvard Gazette](#).

Thank you,

Stacey Wells, Constituent