

Testimony on HB1255 – FAVORABLE

Expansion of Commercial Gaming - Internet Gaming Referendum

House Ways and Means Committee – March 5, 2026

Ways and Means Committee and Members of the Maryland General Assembly,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit **FAVORABLE testimony in support of HB1255.**

Maryland faces an education funding crisis in the years ahead, with the Blueprint having a projected shortfall of \$3 billion by FY30. Local education agencies face their own funding challenges, with some local governments such as my home Prince George's County barely contributing above the state minimum funding requirements. Critical programs, such as the school construction progress made possible by the Built to Learn Act, require additional renewed investment. Our public schools need every potential source of revenue, and these funding challenges negatively impact the people who matter most: Maryland students.

When it comes to keeping our promise to adequately invest in Maryland students and fully fund the Blueprint and public education, we are not heading towards a fiscal cliff. We are *already* dangling over it.

That is why I strongly support HB1255 to give Maryland the *opportunity* of generating desperately needed revenue for public education. This legislation alone would not unilaterally implement Internet Gaming in Maryland. It includes important checks and balances by giving Maryland voters a chance to exercise their voice via statewide referendum, as required by law. But at a time with very few significant revenue proposals on the table, HB1255 is the rare legislation this session that could help generate real education investment.

Maryland already allows other forms of Internet-based wagering, and HB1255 could help position Maryland to be on a level economic playing field with regional states such as Delaware, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Any funding from Internet Gaming would be generated from participation in a well-regulated, entirely voluntary activity – without any additional taxes for Marylanders for who choose not to participate.

As parents, we only have 13 or 14 years to get education right, depending on whether our children start school in Pre-K or Kindergarten. Our kids can't wait – and they need fully funded schools now. They cannot afford to wait session after session for new revenues – and because HB1255 includes a statewide ballot referendum for November 2026, this session is the time to pass HB1255 and trust Maryland voters to do their own research, weigh this issue, and make their own decision. Otherwise, we must wait at least two more years for potential public education dollars our kids need right now.

HB1255 is only partially about gaming. It is about economic development. It is a way to generate much-needed revenue – *without raising taxes*. And it would mean better funded schools.

Thank you to Delegate Young for introducing this education revenue opportunity. I respectfully urge a FAVORABLE report on HB1255 and ask that you let Marylanders decide.

Timothy Meyer

Former 5-term PTO president in Prince George's County