

# **Expansion of Commercial Gaming - Internet Gaming R**

Uploaded by: Timothy Meyer

Position: FAV

## 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*

**HB1255\_HRT\_FWA.pdf**

Uploaded by: Therese Hessler

Position: FWA



**March 5, 2026**

**House Bill 1255 – Expansion of Commercial Gaming – Internet Gaming Referendum**

**House Ways & Means Committee**

**Position: SUPPORT W/AMENDMENT**

Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and Members of the Committee:

High Roller Technologies respectfully submits this testimony in support with amendments of House Bill 1255, which would authorize a constitutional referendum to allow Maryland voters to determine whether to expand commercial gaming to include internet gaming (iGaming).

While we support the referendum concept, we respectfully urge the Committee to adopt technical amendments to ensure that, if approved by voters, the resulting iGaming market is competitive, inclusive, and structured to maximize innovation, consumer choice, and long-term state revenue. Additionally, it is important that the language in the referendum parities with any language included in legislative initiatives authorizing iGaming.

As currently drafted, the enabling framework appears to limit or constrain eligibility for internet gaming licenses in a manner that could restrict participation primarily to certain existing license holders. If the statutory language adopted prior to referendum approval narrowly defines who may apply for or receive an iGaming license, Maryland risks establishing a closed or semi-closed market structure.

This is particularly significant because once voters approve a constitutional expansion of gaming, the scope of that authorization is tied to the language presented to them. If eligibility categories are drawn too narrowly at the outset, expanding them later could require additional legislative action (and potentially another referendum) creating delay, uncertainty, and lost economic opportunity.

Maryland has already seen how competitive frameworks in sports wagering have encouraged innovation, technology integration, and broader economic participation. A similar approach in iGaming would help ensure the State captures the full economic potential of this emerging sector and allows for participation from qualified entities and equal opportunities for state-based Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs).



To ensure the referendum achieves its intended purpose and avoids unintended structural limitations, we respectfully recommend:

1. ***Clarification of Eligible Applicants***

Amend the enabling language to expressly authorize the State Lottery and Gaming Control Commission to issue internet gaming licenses to a broad class of qualified applicants, including but not limited to:

- Existing video lottery or casino operators
- Sports wagering licensees
- A principal entity of a holder sports wagering facility described under Section 9-1E-06(A)(1)(I)(2) that has been qualified under COMAR 36.10.02.10
- Technology platform providers meeting regulatory suitability standards

2. ***Open Competitive Licensing Structure***

Provide that license issuance is not restricted solely to existing land-based gaming operators

3. ***Regulatory Flexibility***

Ensure that the Commission retains authority to adopt regulations establishing suitability, financial integrity, cybersecurity, and responsible gaming standards applicable to all applicants, without unnecessarily limiting market entry categories.

4. ***Avoidance of Future Referendum Barriers***

Include language clarifying that the General Assembly may refine licensing structures within the scope of the constitutional authorization without requiring additional referenda solely to expand applicant eligibility.

High Roller Technologies strongly supports allowing Maryland voters to decide whether to authorize internet gaming. However, it is equally important that the framework accompanying that decision fosters an open, competitive, and future-ready market.

By clarifying eligibility and ensuring a level playing field at the outset, the General Assembly can protect the integrity of the referendum process while maximizing economic opportunity, innovation, and long-term revenue for the State.

We respectfully urge the Committee to adopt amendments consistent with these recommendations and to advance HB1255 with a competitive and inclusive implementation structure.

Thank you for your consideration.

**For more information call or email:**

Therese M. Hessler | 301-503-2576 | [therese@ashlargr.com](mailto:therese@ashlargr.com)

**Testimony HB1255 and HB 1343 OPPOSE.pdf**

Uploaded by: Amy Millar

Position: UNF



**UFCW LOCAL  
1994 MCGEO**

**Gino Renne, President  
Lisa Blackwell-Brown, Secretary-Treasurer  
Lisa Titus, Recorder**

**A VOICE FOR WORKING AMERICA**

**HB 1255 – Expansion of Commercial Gaming - Internet Gaming Referendum**

**HB 1343 – Internet Gaming - Authorization and Implementation**

Ways and Means Committee

**March 5, 2026**

**Oppose**

Gino Renne, President, UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Gino Renne, and I am proud to serve as President of UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO. On behalf of our members and the broader labor community, I am here to urge you to reject both HB 1255 and HB 1343, which would allow for the legalization of iGaming in Maryland.

Nearly two decades ago, when casino gambling was first authorized in Maryland, Montgomery County’s Senators and Delegates took a principled stand against bringing casinos into our community. That position was reaffirmed in 2012 when the General Assembly approved a sixth casino and once again rejected placing slot machines and table games in Montgomery County. Today, proposals to legalize iGaming would effectively put a casino on every smartphone — in every home, at every kitchen table, and in every pocket. I respectfully ask you to uphold the same commitment demonstrated in the past and say no to this expansion of gambling.

The stakes are not theoretical. Maryland’s six brick-and-mortar casinos currently support approximately 16,000 jobs — many of them well-paying union jobs that allow workers to support their families and contribute to their communities.

Experience with the implementation of iGaming in other states gives us serious cause for concern. After Pennsylvania authorized iGaming, thousands of casino jobs were lost. Independent projections suggest Maryland could lose more than 4,000 jobs if online casino gambling is approved. At a time when working families are already facing economic



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info@mcgeo.org

uncertainty and federal workforce reductions, advancing legislation that risks eliminating stable, family-supporting jobs sends the wrong message.

Beyond the economic impact, the social costs are deeply troubling. Legalizing iGaming would provide 24-hour access to slot machines and table games on every phone, dramatically increasing the risk of gambling addiction and related harms. Research consistently shows that online gambling is more addictive than in-person gaming because of its speed, accessibility, and isolation. A recent Maryland-based analysis estimates that the social costs of iGaming could total hundreds of millions of dollars annually, with vulnerable and minority communities disproportionately affected. We must ask ourselves whether projected revenue is worth the long-term social and economic damage.

On behalf of UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO and working families across our state, I respectfully urge you to reject HB 1255 and HB 1343. Maryland has previously drawn a clear line on expanding casino gambling. I ask you to draw that line again and stand with workers, families, and communities by voting no on iGaming.

# **2026 HB 1255 Maryland Center of Excellence on Prob**

Uploaded by: Blair Inniss

Position: UNF



March 5, 2026

Ways and Means Committee  
130 Taylor House Office Building  
131 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB 1255 – Expansion of Commercial Gaming - Internet Gaming  
Referendum – Oppose

Dear Chair Wilkins:

This letter is in opposition to *HB 1255 – Expansion of Commercial Gaming - Internet Gaming Referendum*. HB 1255 calls for a voter referendum on the legalization of iGaming.

Currently, only eight states have legalized iGaming (Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, West Virginia). iGaming is one of the most addictive activities available.<sup>i</sup> Studies have shown that continuous access to gambling makes individuals more prone to developing compulsive behaviors, as they lack natural “breaks” that physical casinos often provide.<sup>ii</sup>

The ease of access of iGaming is expected to lead to more health and emotional difficulties that come with gambling disorders including substance abuse, depression, and increased suicide rates. We urge an unfavorable report on HB 1255. If you would like more information, please contact Heather Eshleman at [heshleman@som.umaryland.edu](mailto:heshleman@som.umaryland.edu) or (667) 214-2120.

Sincerely,

Heather Eshleman, MPH  
Director of Operations  
Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling  
Office Direct: 667-214-2120  
Email: [heshleman@som.umaryland.edu](mailto:heshleman@som.umaryland.edu)

<sup>i</sup> Morgan State University, Center for Data Analytics and Sports Gaming Research, “The Socio-economic Impact of Legalizing Interactive Gaming (iGaming) and Online Betting in Maryland.” February 14, 2024.

<sup>ii</sup> <https://immunizenevada.org/online-gambling-and-its-psychological-impact/>

# **HB 1255 HB 1343 opposition.pdf**

Uploaded by: Chip Bertino

Position: UNF



OFFICE OF THE  
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

## Worcester County

GOVERNMENT CENTER  
ONE WEST MARKET STREET • ROOM 1103  
SNOW HILL, MARYLAND  
21863-1195

WESTON S. YOUNG, P.E.  
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER  
CANDACE I. SAVAGE, CGFM  
DEPUTY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER  
ROSCOE R. LESLIE  
COUNTY ATTORNEY

COMMISSIONERS  
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CARYN G. ABBOTT  
ANTHONY W. BERTINO, JR.  
ERIC J. FIORI  
JOSEPH M. MITRECIC  
DIANA PURNELL

February 25, 2026

Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins  
130 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
jheanelle.wilkins@house.maryland.gov

Delegate Jessica Feldmark  
130 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
jessica.feldmark@house.maryland.gov

Dear Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark and committee members:

The Worcester County Commissioners strongly oppose HB 1255 Expansion of Commercial Gaming – Internet Gaming Referendum and HB 1343 Internet Gaming - Authorization and Implementation. We are concerned the introduction of internet gaming to Maryland would threaten existing brick-and-mortar institutions, fuel gambling additions and result in lost revenues to jurisdictions in Worcester County.

Worcester County is home to the Ocean Downs Casino. Since opening its doors in 2011, the casino has grown to become a vital tourism and economic development partner, generating more than \$51 million in local impact grant (LIG) funds to Worcester County, Ocean City, Berlin and Ocean Pines. These funds are reinvested in our communities. Just a few of the many projects our jurisdictions have been able to fund, even in years of economic downtown, include improvements to our roadways and bridges, upgrades to public safety radio systems, additional police vehicles, a new Berlin Police Department, and a new Worcester Technical High School that trains area youth for family sustaining careers right here at home.

Unlike the Ocean Downs Casino, which has established partnerships designed to attract residents and visitors to invest their discretionary income in area hotels, eateries and retail establishments, most online gambling operators are out of state. Every dollar spent gambling online would

equate to a direct loss to our local economy. We respectfully urge you to oppose HB 1255 and HB 1343.

Sincerely,



Theodore J. Elder  
President

**Bill Rickman Letter 2026.pdf**

Uploaded by: Denise Hill

Position: UNF

W.M. RICKMAN CONSTRUCTION COMPANY LLC

15215 Shady Grove Road, Suite 201

Rockville, MD 20850

301-840-2011

March 5, 2026

Honorable Jheanelle Wilkins

Chair

Ways & Means Committee

130 Taylor House Office Building

Annapolis, 21401

RE: Opposition to HB 1255, Internet Gaming

Dear Jheanelle,

As the former owner of two casinos, I am writing today in opposition to HB 1255.

Maryland's brick-and-mortar casinos are a cornerstone of the State's economy, driving substantial revenues to Maryland and its local communities. I know firsthand, that the casinos spent over \$3 billion in initial construction and another \$1 billion since opening. In addition, Maryland's "in person" casino gaming supports over 15,000 jobs.

I am very concerned that the introduction of iGaming would cannibalize our brick-and-mortar casinos which would adversely impact the casinos and the casino employees. I am also very worried that iGaming would fuel gambling addictions, since everyone would be able to gamble at any time, day or night, 24/7 on their smart phones or at home on their computers.

I hope that you and your committee members will give HB 1255 an unfavorable report.

Sincerely,



William M. Rickman

**HB1255\_OCChamber\_Thompson\_UNF.pdf**

Uploaded by: DENNIS RASMUSSEN

Position: UNF



## Ocean City, Maryland Chamber of Commerce

410-213-0144 info@oceancity.org  
oceancity.org 12320 Ocean Gateway, Ocean City, MD 21842

### TESTIMONY OFFERED ON BEHALF OF THE GREATER OCEAN CITY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

#### IN OPPOSITION TO: HB1255 – Expansion of Commercial Gaming – Internet Gaming Referendum

Before:  
House Ways and Means Committee  
Hearing: 3/5/2026 at 1:00 PM

The Greater Ocean City Chamber of Commerce, representing over 770 regional businesses and job creators, **OPPOSES** House Bill HB1255 – **Expansion of Commercial Gaming - Internet Gaming Referendum.**

**HB 1255** provides that the General Assembly may authorize, by law, the State Lottery and Gaming Control Commission to issue certain Internet gaming licenses; requiring certain implementation legislation to include certain criteria and specifications, subject to a certain limitation; declaring the intent of the General Assembly that certain revenues be used for dedicated purposes including the funding of public education; and submitting the Act to a referendum of the qualified voters of the State.

The Chamber supports in-person legal gaming because it is highly regulated and prioritizes the safety and well-being of communities. Unlike online gaming, in-person gaming provides effective safeguards to prevent underage gambling, limit excessive access, and address problem gambling through established support programs. Additionally, in-person gaming drives local economic growth by generating stable jobs and reinvesting revenues into schools, infrastructure, and public services.

The rapid expansion of iGaming has created a pressing need for action. To legalize iGaming does a disservice to the people and businesses that support and contribute to Maryland's economy. Beyond this potential harm to our state's finances, legalized online gambling will almost certainly result in a rise in

gambling addiction, which puts the wellbeing and livelihood of Marylanders at serious risk. iGaming threatens our economy, our health, displaces jobs and weakens oversight of responsible practices

The Sage Policy Group and Anne Arundel County Chamber of Commerce published a report further addressing the potential impacts of iGaming, including:

- **Job Losses:** There are six brick-and-mortar casinos in the State which support 27,000 jobs, one of which is here in Ocean City. iGaming jobs are often held out of state which will cause a decline in locally held jobs and available wages and benefits.
- **Harm to Nearby Businesses:** Potential expansion of brick-and-mortar casinos may halt, which limits possible revenue increases and traffic generation for other nearby businesses which benefit from casino traffic. Surrounding entertainment and shopping clusters, many of which opened because of casino traffic, will lose business as fewer guests travel to brick-and-mortar locations.
- **Lost Opportunities:** The loss of casino jobs and vendor opportunities will further harm the success of local businesses.
- **Limited Wages:** iGaming could limit job opportunities for Marylanders with only a high school diploma who currently have access to positions like table games dealer which provide living wages and benefits but may disappear if iGaming is legalized.

For the above reasons, including the economic, operational, and health-related reasons, the Ocean City Chamber respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE REPORT for HB1255**. Please feel free to contact the Chamber directly at 410-213-0144, or Dennis F. Rasmussen, [dfr@rasmussengrp.net](mailto:dfr@rasmussengrp.net) at 410-821-4445 should you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

*Amy Thompson*

Amy Thompson  
Executive Director  
[amy@oceancity.org](mailto:amy@oceancity.org)

*Bob Thompson*

Bob Thompson  
Legislative Committee Chair  
[bob@t1built.com](mailto:bob@t1built.com)

**HB1255\_OPP.pdf**

Uploaded by: Donna Edwards

Position: UNF



## MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

*Affiliated with the National AFL-CIO*

**Donna S. Edwards**  
*President*

**Samuel Epps, IV**  
*Secretary-Treasurer*

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Annapolis, MD 21401-2096

### **HB 1255 - Expansion of Commercial Gaming - Internet Gaming Referendum**

#### **House Ways and Means Committee**

**March 5, 2026**

**OPPOSE**

**Donna S. Edwards**

**President**

#### **Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Madame Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong opposition to HB 1255. On behalf of 700 affiliated unions, I offer the following comments.

The referendum question posed in this bill is misleading and fails to provide essential information to Maryland voters to make an informed decision about a major expansion of commercial gambling. There is a significant difference between sports betting and iGaming; sports betting is a game you play against other people, while iGaming is a game you play against the house. The question, “Do you favor the expansion of commercial gaming in the State of Maryland to authorize Internet gaming for dedicated purposes, including the funding of public education,” suggests a simple choice of whether or not the voter supports schools, but does not highlight the full scope of the consequences that come with legalizing online gaming.

Given this question, voters would not know that this referendum would open the door to 24/7 online gambling access, thus increasing the risk of addiction, financial harm, and mass job loss. Importantly, it also does not inform voters that the implementation details, regulatory framework, consumer protections, and revenue distribution would all be determined after the referendum—this leaves them to vote in the blind.

Maryland voters deserve transparency on what they are voting for, and this bill does not deliver that. This referendum bill omits the significant social, economic, and regulatory ramifications of legalizing online gaming. The State should not put forth a referendum that fails to fully educate the public on the risks and long-term consequences of this expansion.

For these reasons, we strongly urge an unfavorable vote on HB 1255.



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[www.mddclabor.org](http://www.mddclabor.org)



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[instagram.com/md\\_dc\\_aflcio](https://instagram.com/md_dc_aflcio)

**Eitel UAW2503 HB1255 Testimony 030526.pdf**

Uploaded by: Eric Eitel

Position: UNF

**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.

# **J Chorpenning Testimony 3.3.26.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jason Chorpenning

Position: UNF



March 3, 2026

Chair Jheanelle K. Wilkins  
Ways and Means Committee  
130 Taylor House Office Building  
131 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: HB1255 Expansion of Commercial Gaming - Internet Gaming Referendum

Dear Chair Wilkins,

United Food and Commercial Workers Local 27 is writing to express our objection to internet casino gaming (iGaming) in the State of Maryland. We believe any bills or legislation on this topic will adversely impact hard working members of the community, create social ills, and reduce jobs at Maryland's existing casinos. We oppose the legislation and any related referendum.

United Food and Commercial Workers Local 27 represents of over 18,000 members in Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia. Our mission is to secure a living wage, good benefits and a positive work environment for our members.

iGaming is a jobs killer. According to a study by Sage Policy Group, led by former chair of the Maryland Economic Development Commission Anirban Basu, **iGaming could lead to the loss of 2,700 jobs at Maryland's brick and mortar casinos.** As Sage Policy notes, these jobs are often filled with union members and they provide living wages and comprehensive benefits.

According to the Sage Policy Group, **iGaming will result in an annual \$65 million decline in statewide personal income for Marylanders.** Unjustly, members of Maryland's labor force who lack a college degree will bear the brunt of these losses because of the accessibility of casino jobs to workers with a high school diploma or less.

The consensus that iGaming = job destruction is backed up by what we are seeing in other states.

- ***iGaming is presently illegal in 43 States.***
- ***Pennsylvania saw thousands of casino jobs disappear since the launch of iGaming according to Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board reports.***
- ***New Jersey found that iGaming decreased the total amount of money that employees received in wages by about \$900 million. Similarly, nearly 16,000 New Jersey gaming jobs have been lost due to iGaming, according to a November 2023 study by NERA Economic Consulting for The Campaign for Fairer Gambling.***
- ***Recently, New York Governor Kathy Hochul refused to include iGaming in her proposed budget because of concerns over job losses and the negative impact on union jobs, according to public reports.***

Beyond the crushing loss of jobs, iGaming will result in a myriad of problems for Maryland, its citizens and its gaming industry and workers. With dramatic decreases in patron visitation caused by iGaming, the state's brick and mortar casinos will have no incentive to keep investing in and expanding their facilities. This will hurt construction workers, as well as gaming and ancillary workers that would operate the new hotels, restaurants, shopping and entertainment venues and other developments. Casino-ancillary development like Warner Street Entertainment District (Horseshoe Casino in Baltimore City; Arundel Shopping Complex (Live! Casino and Hotel in Anne Arundel County); and Great Wolf Lodge (Hollywood Casino in Perryville) would have no incentive to continue casino expansions.

Sadly, iGaming's harms do not stop with economic damage but also include a very high human cost. The American Psychological Association has described iGaming as "one of the most addictive activities available." 60 Minutes (February 4, 2024, edition) featured a segment on the dangers and massive addiction problems coming from mobile betting on phones. Since the launch of iGaming, calls to problem gambling helplines in New Jersey and Pennsylvania have increased 225% and 140%, respectively. And Les Bernal, National Director of Stop Predatory Gambling and the Campaign for Gambling-Free Kids has called iGaming the "gambling equivalent of fentanyl" for today's youth.

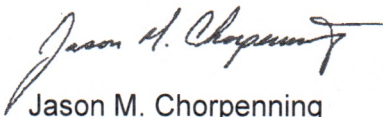
Approximately 16,000 gaming industry workers live in the Free State, and most are union members. Their employers, Maryland's six brick and mortar casinos, have produced billions of dollars in tax revenue for the State, billions of dollars in investment in their facilities and hundreds of millions of dollars of local share funds for their communities. Much of this will be sacrificed if iGaming is legalized.

Support for iGaming is the equivalent of being against union jobs. We urge you to oppose any legislation to authorize iGaming or a referendum on iGaming.

We are prepared to meet with you, or your designees, to further emphasize the point: iGaming will hurt hard working Marylanders and reduce jobs.

Thank you for your consideration of our views on this important matter.

In solidarity,



Jason M. Chorpenning  
UFCW Local 27, President

Cc Nelson L. Hill  
VP/Executive Assistant to the President

# 1255.pdf

Uploaded by: Josh Baker

Position: UNF

Testimony offered on behalf of:  
**Joshua Baker**

**IN OPPOSITION TO:**

**HB 1255 – Internet Gaming**  
**Hearing: 03/05/2026**

**Good afternoon Mister Chairman and Honorable Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee. My name is Joshua Baker, a Union Representative of United Food & Commercial Workers Local 27.**

**Local 27 represents employees at Maryland Live Casino, Hollywood Casino in Perryville and Rocky Gap Casino. In other words, we represent employees at 3 of the 6 casinos in the State of Maryland. In the gaming industry alone, we represent over 3000 employees in the State. Locally, across all industries, we represent over 16,000 employees.**

**As a local union, Local 27 has been and remains quite active in local politics. We make our voices heard in a variety of ways to local politicians.**

**Local 27 is extremely concerned about the proposed legislation on iGaming. We do not take this position lightly. We have done our own research, consulted with unions in other States and read the reports issued by various “experts.” On that point, I want to call out the very slanted and clearly biased report from the Innovation Group, an entity that operates in the iGaming space and is seeking to persuade you to approve iGaming so they and their allies can make money off of Marylanders. Their position, and report, is rooted in greed.**

**I am here today to OPPOSE HB 1255.**

**It is undisputed that iGaming will significantly reduce visits to traditional, brick-and-mortar casinos. When, not if, volume is reduced at gaming properties, it will adversely impact our members and the prospects of job security for those remaining.**

**One regional example is compelling. In the years since iGaming launched in Pennsylvania, multiple casinos requested to reduce the numbers of slot machines at their facilities, which hurt employment levels. As per reports from the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board, despite five (5) new casinos**

**opening – the workforce in Pennsylvania casinos has suffered a cut of nearly 10%, with more than 2000 employees losing their jobs.**

**Since casino gaming was legalized in Maryland, we have negotiated five labor agreements at Maryland Live, three labor agreements at Hollywood Casino in Perryville and two labor agreements in Rocky Gap. In each of those bargaining sessions, our members were able to secure higher pay, benefit improvements and confidence in their career selection. Our members, many of whom came from industries that shut down in the last recession, finally felt they had job security.**

**To state it clearly: iGaming is a jobs killer. Everywhere it has been introduced, it reduced staff at brick and mortar casinos. When, not if, that happens in Maryland, it will hurt our members.**

**The irony of my appearance today, to testify against iGaming, is not lost on me. Normally, management and labor are on different sides of various economic arguments. But today, we are on the same page. iGaming will hurt brick and mortar casinos. When volume is reduced, wages and benefits and ultimately jobs will be reduced. When that happens, our members will suffer.**

**Today, our members in the gaming industry earn a good income, with solid health benefits and job protections. The security of these jobs now rests with you, our elected leaders. You can decide to “roll the dice” and focus on revenue needs, or protect the jobs that exist in the State.**

**I urge you to vote against HB 1255.**

**Respectfully,**

**Joshua Baker  
J.BAKER@UFCW27.ORG**

# **HB1255 - iGaming Expansion Oppose (1).pdf**

Uploaded by: Kristen Pironis

Position: UNF



**Testimony in *Opposition* of House Bill 1255**  
**Expansion of Commercial Gaming – Internet Gaming Referendum**

**To:** Delegate Jheanelle K. Wilkins  
Chair, Ways and Means Committee

**Written testimony from:** Kristen Pironis  
Chief Executive Officer, Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County  
26 West Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
410-280-0445 / [kp@visitannapolis.org](mailto:kp@visitannapolis.org)

**Date:** March 3, 2026

Dear Chair Wilkins and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

Live! Casino and Arundel Mills, in Anne Arundel County, is Maryland's most visited tourist attraction. On behalf of Visit Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, the destination marketing and management organization for Anne Arundel County, I am writing to express our strong **opposition** to House Bill 1255 regarding the expansion of commercial internet gaming.

The legalization of iGaming in Maryland is a significant threat to our partners, businesses, and community. Internet gaming eliminates the need to travel to brick and mortar casinos, which directly translates to people not eating in adjacent restaurants, staying in hotels, and patronizing shops and retail—Internet Gaming literally makes people stay home and not travel.

Maryland is home to six brick and mortar casinos that support more than 27,000 jobs, have an annual economic impact of \$5.8 billion, and generate \$1.4 billion in taxes, reports the American Gaming Association. In addition, Maryland gaming tax revenue directly funds critical public school construction projects, local impact grants, and supports small and minority-owned businesses.

Internet Gaming jobs will cause a decline in locally held jobs, available wages and benefits, and will directly impact job opportunities for Marylanders with a high school diploma who currently have access to positions like table games dealers, which provide good living wages and benefits. Further, Internet Gaming will harm our casinos and the surrounding entertainment and shopping clusters, many of which opened because of and are directly supported by visitors to casinos—impacting even more jobs and Marylanders.

Legalizing Internet Gaming is a disservice to the people and businesses that support and contribute to Maryland's economy. Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County strongly urges you to oppose this bill. Thank you for your service and your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kristen Pironis  
Chief Executive Officer, Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County

**HB 1255.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: Miranda Lan

Position: UNF



# METROPOLITAN BALTIMORE COUNCIL AFL-CIO Unions

**HB 1255 Expansion of Commercial Gaming - Internet Gaming Referendum  
Ways and Means Committee  
March 5th, 2026  
Unfavorable**

To: Chair & members of the House Ways and Means Committee

From: Courtney Jenkins, President, Metropolitan Baltimore Council AFL-CIO Unions

Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Courtney Jenkins, President of the Metro Baltimore AFL-CIO, representing thousands of union members and working families across our region. On behalf of our labor community, I stand in strong opposition to House Bill 1255.

While this proposal may be presented as a modernization effort or a revenue opportunity, it fails to fully account for the long term consequences for working people whose livelihoods are tied to the affected industry. Time and again, we have seen policies framed as innovation or efficiency lead to the erosion of stable, unionized employment in favor of models that rely on fewer workers, lower labor standards, and weaker worker protections.

Union jobs are not just line items in a fiscal note; they are careers that provide family-sustaining wages, healthcare, retirement security, and pathways into the middle class. When legislation restructures an industry in ways that reduce brick and mortar storefronts, centralize services, or shift work to models that require fewer employees, the direct result is job loss, reduced hours, and downward pressure on wages. The workers impacted are not abstract numbers, they are Maryland residents who contribute to their communities, pay taxes, and support local businesses. You can see this in Michigan, when within 5 years there was a 37% decline in unionized staff.

Even when legislation includes regulatory structures or limited mitigation funds, those measures rarely offset the broader economic impact of lost jobs. Temporary funds or transition language cannot replace permanent, good paying union positions. Nor do such provisions guarantee collective bargaining rights, labor standards, or long-term employment stability. Once jobs are eliminated or significantly reduced, they are unlikely to return.

The Metro Baltimore AFL CIO believes that public policy should prioritize strengthening industries that provide high quality union employment, not incentivize shifts that weaken them. We must



# METROPOLITAN BALTIMORE COUNCIL AFL-CIO Unions

carefully consider whether this bill protects workers, preserves existing union jobs, and ensures that economic growth benefits Maryland families, not just corporate interests or out of state entities.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge an unfavorable report on House Bill 1255. Maryland's working families deserve policies that build and protect good union jobs, not legislation that risks undermining them.

Thank you for your consideration.

Courtney Jenkins  
President  
Metropolitan Baltimore Council AFL-CIO

**NCADD-MD - 2026 HB 1255 UNF - iGaming Referendum -**

Uploaded by: Nancy Rosen-Cohen

Position: UNF



**House Ways & Means Committee  
March 5, 2026**

**House Bill 1255 – Expansion of Commercial Gaming - Internet Gaming  
Referendum**

**Oppose**

The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence-MD strongly opposes House Bill 1255. We believe that making gambling as easy as picking up your phone at any hour of any day is a dangerous step, especially for young people. This issue should not be put to a popular vote.

Evidence is growing that shows more and more young people are accessing gambling activities online. While no one in this General Assembly is advocating for young people to gamble, we know they are gambling and access will increase. The 2021-22 Youth Risk Behavior Survey showed that among high school students in Maryland, 14% at or under the age of 14 reported gambling, and that number rose to 21% of those at least 18 years old.

Overall, research shows that more people in Maryland are gambling, and the number of people who are considered to have a gambling disorder has risen as well. ([Statewide Gambling Prevalence in Maryland: 2022](#))

We need more research related to mobile gaming. We need to learn lessons from other states and countries around the world. We should not be rushing into iGaming without understanding the impact and until we believe we have the resources to mitigate the harms it will lead to.

We respectfully oppose House Bill 1255.

# **N Hill Testimony 3.3.26.pdf**

Uploaded by: Nelson Hill

Position: UNF



March 3, 2026

Chair Jheanelle K. Wilkins  
Ways and Means Committee  
130 Taylor House Office Building  
131 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: HB1255 Expansion of Commercial Gaming - Internet Gaming Referendum  
HB1343 Internet Gaming – Authorization and Implementation

Dear Chair Wilkins,

United Food and Commercial Workers Local 27 is writing to express our objection to internet casino gaming (iGaming) in the State of Maryland. We believe any bills or legislation on this topic will adversely impact hard working members of the community, create social ills, and reduce jobs at Maryland's existing casinos. We oppose the legislation and any related referendum.

United Food and Commercial Workers Local 27 represents of over 18,000 members in Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia. Our mission is to secure a living wage, good benefits and a positive work environment for our members.

iGaming is a jobs killer. According to a study by Sage Policy Group, led by former chair of the Maryland Economic Development Commission Anirban Basu, ***iGaming could lead to the loss of 2,700 jobs at Maryland's brick and mortar casinos.*** As Sage Policy notes, these jobs are often filled with union members and they provide living wages and comprehensive benefits.

According to the Sage Policy Group, ***iGaming will result in an annual \$65 million decline in statewide personal income for Marylanders.*** Unjustly, members of Maryland's labor force who lack a college degree will bear the brunt of these losses because of the accessibility of casino jobs to workers with a high school diploma or less.

The consensus that iGaming = job destruction is backed up by what we are seeing in other states.

- ***iGaming is presently illegal in 43 States.***
- ***Pennsylvania saw thousands of casino jobs disappear since the launch of iGaming according to Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board reports.***
- ***New Jersey found that iGaming decreased the total amount of money that employees received in wages by about \$900 million. Similarly, nearly 16,000 New Jersey gaming jobs have been lost due to iGaming, according to a November 2023 study by NERA Economic Consulting for The Campaign for Fairer Gambling.***

Beyond the crushing loss of jobs, iGaming will result in a myriad of problems for Maryland, its citizens and its gaming industry and workers. With dramatic decreases in patron visitation caused

by iGaming, the state's brick and mortar casinos will have no incentive to keep investing in and expanding their facilities. This will hurt construction workers, as well as gaming and ancillary workers that would operate the new hotels, restaurants, shopping and entertainment venues and other developments. Casino-ancillary development like Warner Street Entertainment District (Horseshoe Casino in Baltimore City; Arundel Shopping Complex (Live! Casino and Hotel in Anne Arundel County); and Great Wolf Lodge (Hollywood Casino in Perryville) would have no incentive to continue casino expansions.

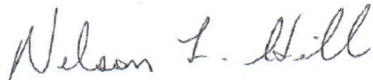
Sadly, iGaming's harms do not stop with economic damage but also include a very high human cost. The American Psychological Association has described iGaming as "one of the most addictive activities available." 60 Minutes (February 4, 2024, edition) featured a segment on the dangers and massive addiction problems coming from mobile betting on phones. Since the launch of iGaming, calls to problem gambling helplines in New Jersey and Pennsylvania have increased 225% and 140%, respectively. And Les Bernal, National Director of Stop Predatory Gambling and the Campaign for Gambling-Free Kids has called iGaming the "gambling equivalent of fentanyl" for today's youth.

Approximately 16,000 gaming industry workers live in the Free State, and most are union members. Their employers, Maryland's six brick and mortar casinos, have produced billions of dollars in tax revenue for the State, billions of dollars in investment in their facilities and hundreds of millions of dollars of local share funds for their communities. Much of this will be sacrificed if iGaming is legalized.

Support for iGaming is the equivalent of being against union jobs. We urge you to oppose any legislation to authorize iGaming or a referendum on iGaming.

We are prepared to meet with you, or your designees, to further emphasize the point: iGaming will hurt hard working Marylanders and reduce jobs.

Thank you for your consideration of our views on this important matter.



Nelson L. Hill  
VP/Executive Assistant to the President  
UFCW Local 27  
21 West Rd, Baltimore, MD 21204

# **2026 Investment sheet Final.pdf**

Uploaded by: Ruth Toomey

Position: UNF

# TOURISM

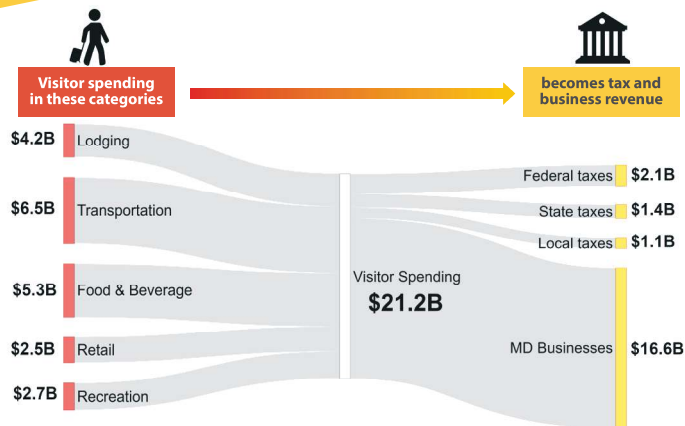
## is a Growth Strategy for Maryland



### Visitor spending fuels Maryland's economy.

Visitor dollars flow quickly and broadly through Maryland businesses. In 2024:

- **\$16.6 billion** flowed directly to Maryland businesses.
- **\$4.6 billion** supported public services.
- Visitor spending **generated substantial multiplier effects**, producing nearly **60% additional business activity**.
- Without tourism, Marylanders would have to pay **\$1,051 per household in increased taxes**.



Visitor-supported businesses are often **small, local, and employment-intensive**, creating entrepreneurial opportunity and strengthening local supply chains across industries such as **finance, insurance, real estate, and business services**.

### Tourism builds Maryland's workforce in every county.

Tourism is one of Maryland's largest employment engines.



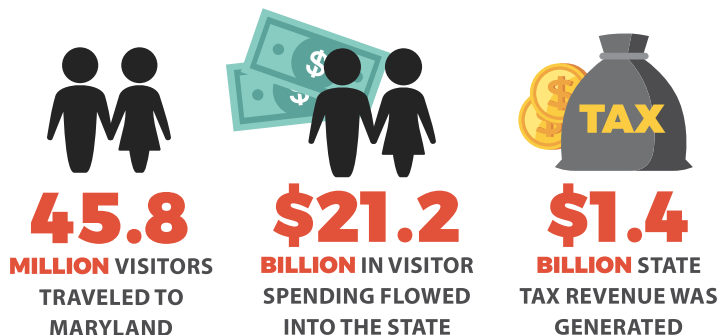
- **193,845 total jobs** supported (1 in every 21 jobs statewide).
- **\$10.5 billion in wages** paid to Maryland workers.

Tourism supports **more jobs than manufacturing statewide** and provides accessible entry points for young workers, career switchers, entrepreneurs, and seasonal employees. Importantly, tourism jobs exist in **every Maryland county**, not just growth corridors.

### Tourism marketing is a responsible investment.

Tourism is the front door and catalyst for Maryland's broader economic growth cycle supporting businesses, jobs, and communities in every region of the state.

Economic vitality in Maryland starts with a visit. Tourism is an economic and workforce strategy, not a discretionary expense. In 2024:



# TOURISM

## is a Growth Strategy for Maryland

**Tourism advertising delivers fast ROI, growing near-term revenue without raising taxes.**

### Typical Time to First Measurable Return



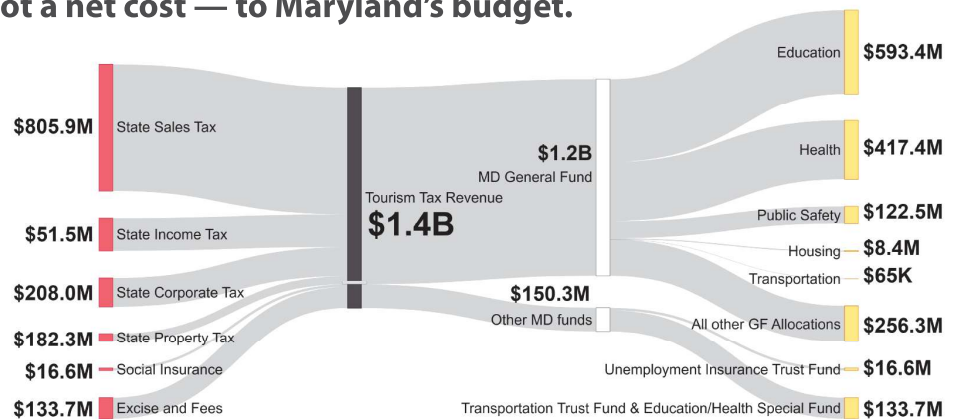
**Tourism doesn't compete with long-term investments. It helps pay for and sustain them.**

- **78% of Maryland visitors are leisure travelers** who are highly influenced by advertising.
- **\$1 in advertising returns \$55 in hotel bookings** and approximately:
  - ▶ \$354 in per-trip visitor spending.
  - ▶ \$69 in General Fund revenue.
- **Visitor spending begins to hit Maryland cash registers 60-90 days** after advertising placement.

**Visitor spending funds the things Marylanders value most.**

**Tourism is a net contributor — not a net cost — to Maryland's budget.**

- Visitor spending generated **\$1.4 billion in state tax revenue** in 2024.
- **\$1.2 billion** flowed directly to the General Fund, supporting Education, Health, Public Safety and more for Maryland residents.
- **Only 0.78%** of tourism-generated General Fund revenue is currently reinvested in tourism marketing.



**Failing to invest in tourism is risky.**  
**Ultimately, tourism marketing:**

Grows near-term revenue without raising taxes.

Supports jobs in every county.

Strengthens quality of life for residents.

Reinforces Maryland's economic competitiveness.

Is one of the state's most efficient and accountable growth tools.

*Economic impact data provided by Tourism Economics. Advertising performance tracked by Adara. Analysis and visualizations provided by Gray Research Solutions.*



# **HB1255 MTC Testimony - Oppose.pdf**

Uploaded by: Ruth Toomey

Position: UNF



March 3, 2026

The Honorable Jheanelle K. Wilkins  
Ways & Means Committee  
3 West Miller Senate Office Building Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Wilkins and Members of the Ways & Means Committee

My name is Ruth Toomey, Executive Director of the Maryland Tourism Coalition (MTC), the trade association representing all sectors of Maryland's tourism industry. I respectfully urge you to oppose HB1255.

Maryland is home to six brick-and-mortar casinos, including properties. These facilities are not simply gaming floors. They are integrated hospitality and entertainment destinations that include hotels, restaurants, retail, golf courses, spas, live entertainment venues, and meeting space.

They are also year-round employers—particularly critical in rural jurisdictions—providing thousands of stable jobs with upward mobility. These properties drive visitation not only to their facilities but to surrounding destinations, supporting restaurants, retailers, cultural attractions, and small businesses throughout their regions.

Legalizing iGaming threatens that ecosystem.

### **The Economic Substitution Effect**

iGaming does not create new entertainment demand at scale—it often shifts existing consumer spending from physical destinations to online platforms. That substitution effect carries measurable consequences:

- Land-based casino revenues decline when iGaming is introduced.
- Capital expansion plans are paused or canceled.
- On-site employment contracts.
- Ancillary businesses lose visitor traffic.

A study by National Economic Research Associates (NERA) concluded that although iGaming can generate headline revenue and tax collections, the broader fiscal picture is far more complex:

- Social costs associated with problem gambling substantially offset fiscal gains.
- iGaming is significantly less labor-intensive than brick-and-mortar casinos, meaning fewer wages circulate in local economies.
- In modeling scenarios, equivalent consumer spending in non-gambling recreation generated greater economic output and higher wage impacts than iGaming.



Separate industry reporting has cited findings that land-based casino revenue drops an average of 16% after iGaming introduction. Those declines translate directly into job losses, reduced economic output, and lower tax contributions that support public services.

This is not theoretical. In multiple states, projections estimate thousands of brick-and-mortar job reductions following iGaming legalization.

### **Impact on Local Communities and Nonprofits**

Maryland's existing casino model was intentionally structured to ensure community reinvestment. Approximately 5.5% of gross VLT proceeds are directed to local impact grants in the jurisdictions where facilities operate.

These funds support:

- Public safety
- Education
- Human services
- Infrastructure
- Community beautification
- Nonprofit programming

For example, in FY2025:

- Live! Casino & Hotel Maryland, through the Anne Arundel County Local Development Council, awarded approximately \$17.5 million in local impact and community grants.
- The Video Lottery Terminal Local Community Grant Program in Cecil County awarded approximately \$700,000 to nonprofit and community organizations addressing priority needs.

iGaming revenue is not structured to replace or proportionally supplement these local grant streams. If brick-and-mortar revenues decline, local impact funding declines. That means fewer dollars for nonprofits, schools, public safety, and community development.

### **Tourism and Competitive Positioning**

Maryland's casinos function as destination anchors within the broader tourism economy. They draw overnight visitors who spend on lodging, dining, retail, and attractions across the state.

iGaming shifts that spending into private digital channels with minimal employment footprint and limited secondary economic impact. The result is a smaller multiplier effect and diminished community reinvestment.



Tourism businesses across Maryland depend on visitation, foot traffic, and experiential spending. iGaming fundamentally alters that dynamic.

### **Conclusion**

HB1255 presents significant unintended economic consequences:

- Reduced brick-and-mortar revenue
- Job losses
- Halted capital investment
- Lower local impact funding
- Increased social costs
- Weaker tourism ecosystem performance

The question before you is not simply whether iGaming generates tax revenue. It is whether it generates **net economic benefit** for Maryland communities.

On behalf of the Maryland Tourism Coalition and the broader hospitality industry, I respectfully urge an unfavorable report on HB1255.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Ruth Toomey  
Executive Director  
Maryland Tourism Coalition  
336-254-4648  
[ruth@mdtourism.org](mailto:ruth@mdtourism.org)

\* <https://igamingbusiness.com/gaming/online-casino/new-jersey-study-finds-igaming-detrimental-economy-tax-benefits/>

\*\* CDC Gaming <https://cdcgaming.com/gaming-industry-polarization-over-igaming-deepens>

**HB 1255.pdf**

Uploaded by: Shane Sterry

Position: UNF

**Testimony offered on behalf of:  
Shane Sterry**

**IN OPPOSITION TO:  
HB 1255 – Internet Gaming  
Hearing: 3/5/2026**

**Good afternoon, Chairwoman Wilkins and Honorable Members of the House Ways and Means Committee.**

**My name is Shane Sterry. I am the Assistant Vice President of the Seafarers Entertainment and Allied Trades Union. Between Hollywood Casino in Perryville and Maryland Live!, our union represents well over 1000 casino workers in the State of Maryland. We also represent thousands of casino workers across the country in various other States.**

**As a union representing casino workers, we have firsthand experience with the realities of internet gaming expansion. On that basis, I am here today to strongly OPPOSE HB 1255.**

**Since casino gaming was legalized in Maryland, our members have worked hard to bring revenue to the casino owners, and millions of tax dollars to the State of Maryland. We have negotiated in good faith with casino operators for jobs that pay a living wage, provide health care benefits for our members and their families, and ensure job protections.**

**In every State where iGaming has been legalized, there have been negative ramifications to the casino industry and its workforce. I am not here to dwell on the societal negatives of iGaming, such as gaming addiction, underage gaming, and financial ruin faced by many people. You are well aware of these risks.**

**What I am here to discuss is the job loss and the livable wage decrease that every tipped employee will face if iGaming is approved.**

**Pennsylvania and New Jersey provide clear examples of iGaming's effect on casino employment. In Pennsylvania, more than 4,000 casino jobs were lost after iGaming was introduced, and in New Jersey, roughly 16,000 jobs were lost.**

Even the most conservative reports about iGaming in Maryland suggest that **between 1,290 and 1,600 jobs will be lost if iGaming is passed. By comparison, in Michigan - one of the largest states to implement iGaming, an average of just 6 jobs were created per iGaming license.**

**Physical casinos reinvest revenues into schools, infrastructure, local events, public safety, and local businesses. By contrast, iGaming often funnels profits out of state, depriving communities of vital resources and funding. iGaming simply steals its revenue from the existing brick-and-mortar casino operations.**

**As a union that works hard to protect our members, and to ensure our members get a 'fair share' of the profit casino operators make, it was always my sense that the obstacles we faced were the casino owners. By passing this Bill, you are directly saying that all of the casino jobs are not important, and that the revenue to the State is more important.**

**As our elected legislators, I have great admiration for the work you do. It must be quite vexing to repeatedly balance the services needed for the residents, the cost of those services, and where the money will come from. And while I understand the economic attraction of iGaming, studies show that iGaming will take money and customers away from brick-and-mortar casinos. In turn, this will severely impact our members' jobs and financial stability.**

**I urge you to vote against House Bill 1255.**

**Respectfully,**

**Shane Sterry  
[sserry@seafarers.org](mailto:sserry@seafarers.org)  
443-398-1539**

# **Maryland E Gaming Testimony for Mar 5 2026.pdf**

Uploaded by: Staci Carter

Position: UNF

March 5, 2026

Good afternoon,

My name is Staci Carter. I am a full-time table games dealer at MGM National Harbor, where I have worked for five years. I am also the President of UAW Local 2503 representing table games and poker dealers at our property.

I am here in strong opposition to House Bills 1255 & 1343 and Senate Bills 761, 884, & 885

Casino dealing is a learned trade. We must attend dealer school and pass extensive background checks. We study procedures, game protection, math accuracy, and customer management. We practice for months and must pass rigorous auditions before ever stepping onto a live casino floor. This is a skilled profession.

And for dealers, tips are not a bonus — they make up the majority of our income. Online casino expansion directly threatens that income structure. Every player who chooses to gamble on a phone instead of sitting at a live table removes income from a trained Maryland worker. Electronic platforms do not tip. Software does not support families.

I also want to address the employee displacement funds included in these bills.- Which seems to be the only provision given to off set the estimated 1,290 to 1,611 jobs lost with passing of these bills. -- Displacement funds typically increase unemployment support. With respect, we are not asking for stronger unemployment benefits. We are asking to keep our jobs. We do not want help after harm is done — we want protection before it happens.

MGM National Harbor operates in the Washington, DC metropolitan area — one of the highest cost-of-living regions in the country. Our members work hard to maintain middle-class stability in an extremely expensive area. We cannot afford another drain on our salaries.

Maryland legalized casinos to create real, sustainable jobs for real families. I and the people I represent are not line items in a fiscal note. We are parents. We are homeowners. We are taxpayers. We built our lives around the promise that this industry would provide stable, in-person work.

Please do not replace skilled Maryland workers with software.

Please protect the jobs you helped create.

Thank you.

**AFT\_HB 1255.iGamingreferendumOppose.pdf**

Uploaded by: Todd Reynolds

Position: UNF

Kenya Campbell  
PRESIDENT

LaBrina Hopkins  
SECRETARY-TREASURER

**Written Testimony Submitted to the  
Maryland House Ways and Means Committee  
HB 1255  
Expansion of Commercial Gaming - Internet Gaming Referendum  
March 5, 2026  
UNFAVORABLE**

Good afternoon, Chair Wilkens, Vice Chair Feldmark, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee. AFT-Maryland is the state federation for a number of public K-12 education, public higher education, and public employee unions in our state, representing over 20,000 employees in the Baltimore Teachers Union, county and municipal government employees in multiple regions, the full-time faculty at eight of the state's community colleges, and four different state employees unions, including the Maryland Professional Employees Council (MPEC), the union representing state employees employed by the Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency (MLGCA). On behalf of these workers, and especially the state employees in MPEC working as regulators for the MLGCA in our state's brick-and-mortar casinos, AFT-Maryland calls for an unfavorable report to HB 1255.

The proliferation of internet gaming poses a threat to our state's brick-and-mortar casinos, which operate as a place for good paying jobs for residents of our state. AFT-Maryland members, as regulators for these brick-and-mortar locations, will not be immune to these threats; the closing of these casinos due to reduced traffic will in turn mean that fewer state regulators will be needed to be located in those casinos for enforcement of state laws and regulations.

Online gambling sites are additionally more difficult to regulate as well. Many states such as Delaware, Michigan, and West Virginia report regulatory compliance issues when expanding to internet gambling. As many of these internet gambling corporations operate outside of Maryland, and in some cases, outside of the United States, compliance to basic state laws and standards to protect Marylanders cannot be guaranteed.

For these reasons, AFT-Maryland calls for an unfavorable report to HB 1255. Thank you.

# **UNITE HERE iGaming Testimony 2026.pdf**

Uploaded by: Tracy Lingo

Position: UNF

## Opposition Testimony

### HB1255 Expansion of Commercial Gaming – Internet Gaming Referendum

Before the Ways and Means Committee of the Maryland House of Delegates

March 5, 2026

Presented by

Tracy Lingo, President, UNITE HERE Local 7

Thank you, Chairwoman Wilkins for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Tracy Lingo, and I am the president of UNITE HERE Local 7, the casino, hotel, food service, and hospitality workers union in Maryland. UNITE HERE is the largest union of casino workers in the US, representing over 100,000 members who work in casinos in Las Vegas, Atlantic City, and throughout the country. Local 7 proudly represents workers at the Horseshoe Casino in Baltimore and the Ocean Downs Casino in Worcester County. Our sister local, UNITE HERE Local 25, represents workers at the MGM National Harbor in Prince George's County.

I am here today to strongly oppose the legalization of iGaming and to share our union's direct experience with job loss in iGaming states.

Over the past six years in New Jersey, internet gaming revenue skyrocketed from under \$500 million to over \$2.9 billion annually – a 503% increase. Over the same period, **the number of jobs in Atlantic City casinos fell by 20%**, according to reports from the New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement.

In Michigan, our union has seen an even more dramatic loss in casino jobs. In 2019, our union had 2,796 members working in hotel and food and beverage jobs at all three downtown Detroit casinos. In 2021, Michigan launched iGaming. By late 2025, we had 1,767 members at the same casinos, **a loss of 1,029 casino jobs represented by UNITE HERE in Detroit, a 37% decline**. Less than five years after implementation of iGaming, Detroit casinos now make more revenue from casino games online than in-person – a rapid and radical change in the industry.

Our members work in hotel and food and beverage jobs in casinos. They are housekeepers, servers, bartenders, cooks, and dishwashers. These positions make up most of the union jobs in the industry and are completely dependent on in-person customers. When Maryland voters approved casino legalization in a statewide referendum, we voted in favor based on the promise that the industry would create good jobs. Legalizing internet gaming will put these jobs at risk. Our members could face lost hours, lost tips, and layoffs.

Our union is fighting to create good jobs in the hospitality industry. The reality in non-union hospitality sector jobs throughout Maryland is that workers face poverty wages and struggle to get by. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, in the Accommodation

and Food Services sector, only 38% of workers have access to employer-sponsored health care benefits, only 1% of workers have a defined-benefit pension plan, and only 3% of workers have a union. Good, union jobs with high wages, affordable health insurance, and retirement benefits are not easily replaced. Our members have organized, marched, and bargained for years in the gaming industry to improve their jobs and to uplift their families and their communities. Just this year, many of you have heard testimony from our members at Ocean Downs who are currently calling on Churchill Downs to keep its promise of family supporting jobs to the Maryland public. We cannot put their progress at risk.

To be clear, we oppose both the referendum bills, HB 1255 and SB 0761, as well as the authorization and implementation bills, HB 1343 and SB 0885.

Please stand with casino workers and their families. Thank you.

**HB1255 RSI INFO.pdf**

Uploaded by: Keith Walmsley

Position: INFO



**Letter of Information on HB1255**  
**Expansion of Commercial Gaming - Internet Gaming Referendum**  
**March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

**Chair Wilkins and distinguished members of the Ways & Means Committee:**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this letter of information on HB1255, which would authorize and implement internet casino wagering in Maryland.

Rush Street Interactive (“RSI”) is a leading regulated online casino and sports betting operator in North America and currently operates as a Maryland legal online sportsbook under the BetRivers brand. We operate exclusively in regulated jurisdictions and have been a pioneer in U.S. online casino gaming since launching our first regulated real-money platform in 2016. Today, RSI operates online casino platforms in five U.S. states — as many as any operator — as well as in other regulated international markets.

**Online Casino Gaming Is Already Occurring in Maryland — Without Safeguards**

The policy question before the Committee is not whether online casino gaming will occur in Maryland. It already is.

Marylanders are wagering billions of dollars annually on illegal, unregulated and offshore casino websites. These operators actively target states that lack a legal online casino option. Their platforms are sophisticated, widely marketed, and often indistinguishable from licensed operators, but they:

- Do not conduct meaningful age or identity verification.
- Do not enforce self-exclusion programs.
- Do not offer deposit, time, or wager limits.
- Do not monitor play for signs of problem gambling.
- Provide no consumer recourse or regulatory oversight
- Pay no taxes to the State of Maryland.

Illegal and unregulated online casino gambling already operates in Maryland. The State currently has zero oversight, zero enforcement authority, and receives zero tax revenue from this activity.

### **Demand Exists — Regulation Channels It Into a Controlled Market**

Demand for online casino gaming is not going away. Prohibiting a regulated option does not eliminate participation; it simply pushes players to unregulated operators.

Legalization channels existing activity into a framework Maryland can regulate, supervise, and tax.

Many of Maryland's surrounding states — including Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and West Virginia — have established regulated online casino markets that generate hundreds of millions of dollars annually in tax revenue under strict regulatory oversight and responsible gaming requirements.

With a reasonable and competitive tax framework, Maryland likewise could generate hundreds of millions annually in new tax revenue to support education and other State priorities — revenue that is currently flowing to illicit and unregulated operators.

### **Regulation Enables Comprehensive Responsible Gaming and Real-Time Oversight**

The most important distinction between regulated and illegal markets is player protection. Regulated sites offer:

- Multi-layer age and identity verification and strict geolocation enforcement.
- Clear game rules, visible odds disclosures, and independent game certification.
- Segregated and protected player funds with secure data handling.
- Customizable time, deposit, and wagering limits; cooling-off periods; and self-exclusion programs.
- Access to continuous real-time monitoring of account activity with automated risk scoring and trained staff intervention.
- Full access to wagering and deposit history with standardized player notifications.
- 24/7 customer support and trained responsible gaming specialists.

These protections — particularly real-time monitoring and proactive intervention — do not exist in the unregulated market. Offshore operators offer no audits, no monitoring, and no accountability.

Regulation allows Maryland not only to capture revenue, but to lead in responsible gaming standards and consumer protection.

**Maintaining the Status Quo Is a Policy Choice**

- Marylanders will continue wagering on illegal offshore sites.
- Consumer protections will remain unenforceable.
- Problem gambling indicators will go undetected.
- The State will receive no tax revenue.
- Regulators will have no oversight authority.

The choice before the Committee is not between gambling and no gambling. It is between unregulated risk and a system Maryland can control.

RSI stands ready to work with policymakers and regulators to ensure that any authorized online casino framework reflects the highest standards of oversight, responsible gaming, and consumer protection.

Thank you for your consideration.