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**Written Testimony from the AFT-Maryland
SB 325– Constitutional Amendment - Gaming – Expansion
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
February 4, 2020**

SUPPORT

Good afternoon Mr. Chair and members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee. On behalf of the 20,000 state, municipal, and public education workers residing in Maryland, AFT-Maryland enthusiastically calls for a favorable report for SB 325, the bill that will call for a constitutional amendment to allow the general assembly to expand commercial gaming.

As the statewide organization for the Baltimore Teachers Union, as well as unions representing thousands of state employees, AFT-Maryland supports bills that will help bring badly needed revenues into the state. With increased revenues, our state will in a better position to meet the needs of our students and residents who rely on our public school systems. With the passage of this bill and potential passage of the constitutional amendment, Maryland can more quickly respond to the fiscal needs of the state and the residents and students it serves.

Members of the committee: I am sure you are aware of the proposed policy changed introduced to you by the Kirwan Commission. This bi-partisan commission found that significant new resources must be committed to our public school systems so that Maryland can once again deliver a quality public education to all students. One of the recommendations of the commission is that these improvements must be phased in gradually over time; giving the legislature the authority to more quickly to respond to the identified needs as they arise could prevent any unnecessary delays in students and residents getting the education and services they deserve by making it easier for the legislature to raise the required revenues.

It is for these reasons that we ask that this committee give a favorable report to SB 325, Constitutional Amendment - Gaming – Expansion.