

March 23, 2021

Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB 940 (3rd reading) – Gaming - Regulation of Fantasy Gaming Competitions and Implementation of Sports Wagering – Letter of Information

Dear Chair Guzzone and members of the Budget and Taxation Committee:

The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling (the Center) offers two points of clarification to House Bill 940.

First, on page 9, lines 1-2 the bill states that the regulations may include requirements for the establishment of a voluntary exclusion list. The Center suggests changing it to “shall include,” making establishment of a voluntary exclusion list mandatory. Voluntary exclusion programs (VEPs) are effective to deter and stop problem gambling; as many as 95% of individuals who have self-excluded meet criteria for disordered gambling at the time of self-exclusion. Studies have shown that people self-exclude for a number of reasons including suicide prevention, gaining control over gambling, needing help, and hitting rock bottom.¹ Maryland casinos and lotteries currently run successful VEPs and it is in the public interest to require the same of sports betting licensees.

Second, on page 30, lines 20-25 the Center suggests clarifying that the additional funding should be used specifically to develop and implement free or reduced cost problem gambling treatment and prevention programs targeted at individuals with problem gambling issues related to sports wagering, participation in fantasy competitions, and other forms of wagering, whether legal or illegal, conducted in the state or through online means.

The Center is proud to work with the General Assembly to ensure measures are being put into place to protect Marylanders from addiction issues that are highly likely to be the unintended consequences of legalized sports betting.

¹ Igor Yakovenko, David C. Hodgins, Effectiveness of a voluntary casino self-exclusion online self-management program, *Internet Interventions*, Volume 23, 2021, 100354, (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214782920301202>).

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mary Drexler". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large initial "M" and "D".

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