

February 25, 2021

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

**RE: HB 940 – Gaming - Regulation of Fantasy Gaming Competitions and
Implementation of Sports Wagering – Letter of Information**

Dear Chair Kaiser and members of the Ways and Means Committee:

The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling (the Center) is neutral on legalized sports betting and recognizes that illegal sports betting currently occurs in Maryland. However, its legalization will increase availability and acceptability of sports gambling and thus increase participation, which may lead to more gambling problems. For this reason, the Center believes that any expansion of gambling must be accompanied by increased support for gambling addiction prevention and treatment programs. As such, the Center recommends that sports betting legislation during the 2021 legislative session include the following steps to minimize harm.

- I. Require sports betting operators to implement responsible gaming programs.

These programs should be specified in the regulations. The operator must have a written plan with measurable objectives, and an annual report on the progress towards these goals must be provided to the regulator and available for public review. Compliance with the responsible gaming regulations and plan performance should be a condition of licensure and renewal.

- II. Require sports betting licensees to collect data on gambling activity and make such data publicly available to qualified researchers to help support mitigation efforts.

This data is in addition to the PEGASUS Fantasy Sports sub study which has collected data that will specifically assess the impact of legalization on sports betting. PEGASUS results will be available in June 2021 and again in June 2023.

- III. Include the Maryland Problem Gambling Helpline (1-800-GAMBLER) on all printed or downloadable gambling documents or forms, such as tournament brackets, betting lines, or betting odds.

The operator should have a clearly articulated commitment to advertising that does not mislead or target people with gambling problems or minors. Advertising should contain a responsible gaming message and the Maryland Problem Gambling Helpline (1-800-GAMBLER) number. Advertising should not be placed before any audience where most of the audience is ordinarily expected to be below the legal age to participate in gambling activity.

- IV. Internet, mobile, and online gambling options should include all the above, personal responsible gambling data, and limit setting options.

These types of gambling options further increase risk factors for gambling addiction, but this technology also allows additional opportunities to enhance the responsible gaming features described above.

Personal responsible gambling data: Players have readily available access to their gambling history including amounts wagered, won and lost; time and money spent; games played; net wins/losses as well as session information. Players have access to their account details including all deposits, withdrawals, movement of funds between products, bonus information, restrictions such as exclusion events and limits, and net outcomes including total won or lost over a defined period. This information should be readily available across all platforms (including web, desktop, app).

Players can receive live updates during play about time and money spent and account balances in cash, not credits.

Limit setting: The site must allow players to set a variety of limits. These limits must be clearly signposted when a player joins the site.

- Players have the option of setting daily, weekly or monthly limits on the size of deposits.
- Players have the option of setting a system-wide or a product-based limit on the amount of time or money spent.
- Players should have the ability to block themselves from particular games or game types.
- Players should be able to lower limits immediately. Players may request increases in or removal of their limits. After the period ends and a request for increase or removal is made, there will be an additional delay of at least 24 hours and the player must reconfirm their request for the limit to be changed.

Play is stopped when the limit is reached. Players may view the status of their limits on the account details page at any time either via web browser or mobile app.

Time Out: Players have the option of setting time limits. Time-outs are defined as instant stops in play that are at least 12 hours but less than six months. Longer stops in play are available under the self-exclusion procedure. Players may still receive marketing materials during a timeout, unless they wish to exclude.

As with other forms of gambling, there will be a portion of Maryland residents who experience negative consequences as a result of sports betting. It is incumbent upon our governmental

bodies to help both betting companies and their customers by requiring reasonable regulations that will protect individuals from addiction issues that are highly likely to be the unintended consequences of sports betting.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Drexler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mary" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Drexler".

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