



Testimony in support of HB 940

Ways and Means Committee

February 25, 2021

Good afternoon Madame Chair and distinguished members of this committee,

My name is Charles Hopkins and I am President & CEO of RMD Holdings LLC, a resident Maryland firm certified in the state as a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE).

I come before you today in support of HB 940 and to thank the leadership of the House, this committee and the Maryland Legislative Black Caucus for their hard work in ensuring the inclusion of MBEs in the equity and ownership of mobile sports betting licenses in Maryland. The urgency of MBE license inclusion is hastened by the glaring examples today of economic disparities within the Black Community. The foresight of this noble committee a year ago to ensure minority business inclusion was properly analyzed prior to any state procured licensure for sports betting has enabled firms like mine to have a fighting chance to be considered within this new business paradigm.

As a longtime MBE and Native Son of Maryland, I am personally grateful for the resolve shown that minority firms will be able to compete fairly for this opportunity. Consequently, the prospective partnerships that may arise between MBE firms and other stakeholder firms will strengthen the competitive offerings the state will receive from sports betting licensees. With the retraction of in-person gambling due to COVID, ensuring robust mobile sports betting is a critical priority for Maryland gambling revenue, a portion of which is remitted in the form of tax receipts directly back into our communities and supporting local priorities such as our public schools. As with other states, utilizing dynamic partnerships between minority firms and non-casino mobile sports betting platforms will further optimize financial returns to the state and promote its long-held principle of fair and inclusive procurement and licensure procedures.