

February 23, 2023

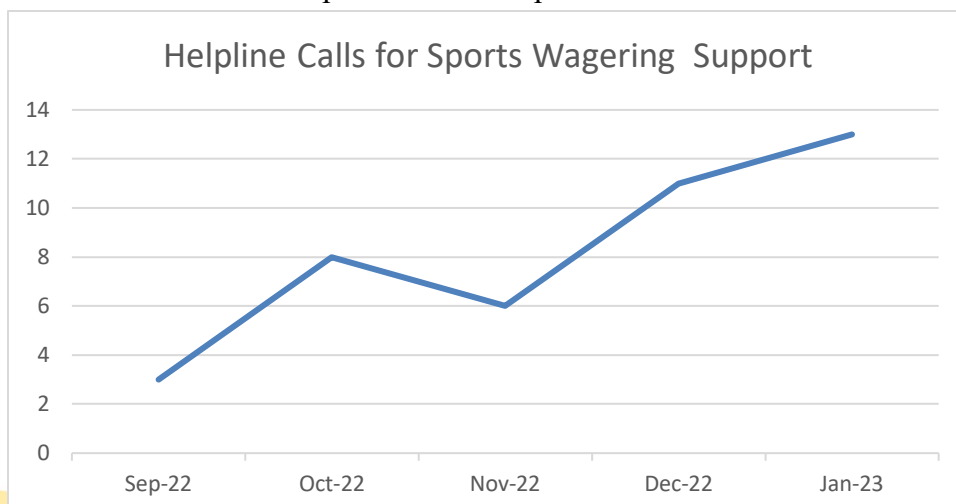
House Ways and Means Committee  
Room 131  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB 668 – Gaming – Problem Gambling Fund – Table Game Fees and  
Distribution of Sports Wagering Proceeds

Dear Chair Atterbeary:

This letter is in strong support of *House Bill 668 – Gaming – Problem Gambling Fund – Table Game Fees and Distribution of Sports Wagering Proceeds*. This bill requires each video lottery operation licensee to pay an annual \$500 fee for each table game for distribution into the Problem Gambling Fund. This bill also diverts 1% of the proceeds from sports wagering in the State Lottery Fund to the Problem Gambling Fund.

The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling (the Center) is fully funded by the Problem Gambling Fund (PGF) to promote healthy and informed choices regarding gambling and problem gambling through public awareness, training and education, prevention, technical assistance to the behavioral health care system, peer recovery support, research, and public policy. The Center, which began operation on July 1, 2012, was created in response to legislation in 2008 that expanded legal gambling opportunities in the State. In recognition that problem gambling is an addiction just like substance use disorder, and access to 24/7 casino gambling will inevitably cause a subset of Marylanders to suffer from this addiction, the PGF was established to provide support for problem gambling treatment, prevention, public awareness, helpline services, and research. While sports wagering is relatively new in the state, here is a simple snapshot of what the Center has experienced in the past few months.





The money the Center receives from the funding streams this bill creates will go towards activities such as:

- More robust counter-marketing campaigns to combat the billions of dollars sportsbooks spend on advertising each year.
- More support for the more than 400 people across the state looking for help at any given time.
- Increased training opportunities to bring more providers into Maryland's no-cost treatment network.
- Public awareness campaigns to targeted special populations such as veterans, especially those with PTSD who experience a 60% higher rate of gambling addiction than the general population.<sup>i</sup>

In creating the PGF in 2008, the General Assembly has already recognized that dedicated problem gambling funding is necessary when increasing gambling access. The Center now comes to you to continue this trend by providing meaningful funding for sports wagering so that all of the programs funded by the PGF can continue to meet the expanding needs of Marylanders. The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling urges a favorable report on HB 668.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Drexler".

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Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling  
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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.kpbs.org/news/military/2020/02/25/va-doubles-down-treatment-gambling-addiction>