



Testimony of Danielle Boyd, Head of Government Relations

**State of Ohio House Finance Committee
October 8, 2019**

Chairman Oelslager and Members of the Committee:

Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

My name is Danielle Boyd and I am the Head of Government Relations for William Hill's U.S. business. Prior to joining the company, I was a gaming regulator in West Virginia for about eight (8) years and served as the Managing General Counsel for the West Virginia Lottery when sports betting was implemented there last year.

William Hill has operated legal sports books in the United Kingdom and other places in the world for 85 years. We are the market leader in Nevada and, post-PASPA, the company has established a presence across the broader U.S with active operations in Delaware, Indiana, Iowa, Mississippi, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, West Virginia, and with a Native American tribe New Mexico.

We appreciate the opportunity to serve as a resource as you discuss House Bill 194, and commend this committee and your legislative colleagues for taking steps to regulate sports betting, which would enable Ohio to keep pace with other states and compete with the thriving black market—which will not easily go away.

As you think about how to best implement sports betting in Ohio, we ask you to consider a few important policy concerns that will impact legal operators if incorporated in legislation.

First and foremost, any legislative provisions that impose a requirement to purchase what professional sports leagues have deemed “official league data” would have a negative impact on legal sports betting operations. Mandating the use of “official league data” just results in monopoly pricing power for the professional sports leagues and makes it difficult for legal bookmakers to price their products in line with black market operators.

Federal courts have rejected the assertion that professional sports leagues have intellectual property rights to data in the public domain, further ruling that it is public information.

Sports leagues have much to gain from legalized sports betting, including sponsorship opportunities, such as the sponsorship agreements we

have with the National Basketball Association and National Hockey League, and several of its teams including the New Jersey Devils, Vegas Golden Knights, Washington Capitals, Washington Mystics, and Washington Wizards.

In addition to these partnerships, professional sports leagues also benefit from increased fan engagement, vastly enhancing the value of franchises and their broadcasting rights. Commercial terms for such agreements are market-based and established by private businesses and should not be imposed legislatively.

The second issue we wish to address involves including wagering restrictions in legislation or allowing third parties to petition regulators to limit wagers on certain events. Limiting betting options available in the legal market or imposing any other restrictions that make it difficult for consumers to bet on events will create a bad fan experience and simply encourage black market wagering.

Offering wagers in a legal, transparent market is the only way to protect the integrity of sports and wagering, and public interest is always best served by offering bettors consumer protections. Additionally, legal book makers can assist sports governing bodies and regulators with integrity monitoring by

identifying and reporting any suspicious activity that would otherwise go undetected.

Finally, we unequivocally oppose any legislative provisions requiring real time data sharing with professional sports leagues as it presents major policy concerns and is technologically burdensome for operators to administer. Transactional wagering data is our proprietary business information, and it is not only inappropriate to require the sharing of such information with a third-party commercial entity, but such release could also compromise the privacy interests of our customers.

The regulator is the only party who should be mandated to receive our transactional information, and we will gladly share wagering and customer data with the Lottery or Casino Control Commission when required. We are happy to collaborate with the sports leagues on best-in-class practices to protect the integrity of games, but it should not be mandated by statute.

We thank you for the opportunity to testify here today and support the legislative effort to legalize sports betting in the state of Ohio.