

**House Finance Committee**

Chairman Brian Stewart
77 South High Street
13th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

May 27, 2025

Good morning, Chairman Stewart, Vice Chairman Dovilla and Ranking Member Sweeney as well as distinguished members of the House Finance Committee. It is an honor to be in Columbus, Ohio this morning to discuss House Bill 298.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and represent Play'n GO, a globally leading supplier in gaming entertainment dedicated to a responsible, sustainable online gaming environment in regulated jurisdictions. My name is Shawn Fluharty and I am from neighboring West Virginia where I also serve as the Minority Whip in the West Virginia House of Delegates. I have been through the committee process and passage of iGaming, which we completed in 2019.

I know a little bit about gaming policy. In the working-class district that I represent in the West Virginia Legislature, which encompasses the city of Wheeling, we have almost every form of regulated gaming. A traditional brick and mortar casino, retail and mobile sports betting, limited video lottery machines, iLottery and iGaming.

In addition to my legislative role, I also serve the President of the National Council of Legislators from Gaming States ("NCLGS") which was founded a quarter century ago and is the only organization of state lawmakers that meets on a regular basis to discuss gaming policy. We are proud to have participation from many Ohio lawmakers and regulators through the years.

Governing is complex, but I can attest that iGaming policy is good public policy. Rarely will you find a piece of legislation this session or any session that can raise new revenue without raising existing taxes all while shrinking the black market and protecting consumers.

Make no mistake about it, iGaming is already in Ohio. It is readily available without consumer protection or revenue generation that a regulated market would provide to the state of Ohio. I am sure you have seen the ads, many of which appear on social media platforms targeting users under the legal gaming age contemplated in this legislation. Estimates show that Ohioans are spending hundreds of millions of dollars annually on illegal websites.

The data from neighboring states is clear: regulated iGaming states are winning.

2024 Gross iGaming Revenue

Pennsylvania	\$2.2 Billion
That State up North	\$2.4 Billion
Ohio	\$0.00
West Virginia	\$190.8 Million

The Black Market Represents Revenue Theft

SUMMARY OF THE U.S. ILLEGAL AND UNREGULATED MARKET			
UNREGULATED MARKET	ESTIMATED HANDLE	ESTIMATED REVENUE	ESTIMATED STATE TAX LOSS
Sports Betting	\$63.8B	\$3.8B	\$700M
Online Slots and Table Games	\$337.9B	\$13.5B	\$3.9B
Unregulated Machines	\$109.2B	\$26.9B	\$8.7B
TOTAL	\$510.9B	\$44.2B	\$13.3B

SOURCE: AMERICAN GAMING ASSOCIATION

House Bill 298 represents the due diligence that the state of Ohio has taken on iGaming and will produce good policy for years to come in the state. We all know about the projected revenue numbers. In any state with a regulated iGaming industry, it far surpasses sports betting revenue, and it is not even close.

This legislation also lays the groundwork for proper consumer protections. For example, the funding of gaming accounts by credit cards is prohibited. Sweepstakes casinos, which are being targeted by many states for violating gaming laws, are also strictly prohibited and will allow Ohio to properly combat the illegal gaming market which currently operates unfettered.

As this bill continues the legislative process, Play'n GO would also support even further consumer protections such as banning direct bonus buys so consumers are not chasing losses or bypassing normal gameplay by directly paying for bonus feature access.

The objectives of House Bill 298 are clear - establish an effective, comprehensive, and efficient regulatory framework consistent with public policy that will foster public confidence and trust in the integrity of the regulatory process and the fairness of internet gaming operations. Ohio already has a very strong gaming regulatory infrastructure in place and is more than ready for the opportunity that iGaming brings to the state.

I look forward to further discussion and I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Shawn Fluharty, Esq.
Head of Government Affairs
Play'n GO

