

## **iDEA Refutes Research by New Small Casino Operator Coalition**

In contrast to this small group of opponents, many leading U.S. casino operators recognize iGaming as a valuable complement to their brick-and-mortar businesses. By embracing digital gaming, they are modernizing their offerings, engaging new customers, and reinvesting in their physical properties and employees. Opposition to iGaming is both misguided and misinformed, ignoring the realities of consumer demand and the benefits of a well-regulated online marketplace for the overall gaming ecosystem.

Forming a group to oppose regulated online gaming does not change the fact that millions of Americans are already gambling online through illegal, unregulated operators that offer no consumer protections, responsible gaming safeguards, or tax contributions to the states.

The real risk to consumers and state economies is not the expansion of legal iGaming—it's the unchecked growth of the illegal and unregulated online gaming market, which thrives in the absence of legal alternatives. iDEA Growth and its members remain committed to ensuring that gaming policy is shaped by facts, experience, and consumer realities.

➤ *VIXIO article by Chris Sieroty published today (2/14/25); references iDEA stance. Reprint for iDEA members below; access on VIXIO site [here](#) (paywall).*

## **New Casino Coalition Formed To Oppose U.S. iGaming Expansion**

**Chris Sieroty | 14 February 2025**

- Group of regional operators form anti-iGaming association
- NAAIG study warns of economic, social risks of iGaming
- Indiana iGaming bill dead for 2025 session, says speaker
- Two of the six casino licensees in key iGaming battleground Maryland are among the founding members of a new coalition opposed to states legalizing online casino games.

Cordish Companies and Churchill Downs Inc are two of the founding members of the National Association Against iGaming (NAAIG), which was officially launched earlier this week.

Cordish operates Live! Casino in Arundel Mills, while Churchill Downs operates Ocean Downs Casino in Berlin, Maryland.

Their opposition comes even though Cordish operates its PlayLive! online gaming platform in Pennsylvania and has a partnership with FanDuel for mobile sports betting in Maryland.

Churchill Downs has formerly offered iGaming and sports betting in Pennsylvania and other states, while it continues to operate TwinSpires.com, the nation's largest online horseracing wagering platform that is offered in more than 40 states.

The NAAIG argues that legalizing iGaming cannibalizes land-based casino revenues and leads to job losses.

The group released a study this week conducted by The Innovation Group that found brick-and-mortar casino revenue drops by an average of 16 percent after iGaming is introduced.

By 2029, an estimated 4,921 jobs in New York and 4,733 in Illinois would be eliminated if iGaming were legalized in those two states, losses in gross domestic product (GDP) could reach \$602m in Ohio, \$428m in Indiana and \$313m in Colorado, according to the study.

The NAAIG also includes Red Rock Resorts, Monarch Casino & Resort, JACK Entertainment, Accel Entertainment and Fountain Gaming, representing a coalition of prominent casino operators in Colorado, Nevada, Ohio and Illinois, as well as Maryland.

The Innovation Group report published by NAAIG has received an unfavorable response from other gaming companies that are actively pushing for expansion of legal online casino games.

Legislation is currently pending in Illinois, Maryland, New Hampshire and New York, with bills having already died in Virginia and Wyoming and another iGaming bill also now on life support in Indiana.

Molly Gillaspie, communications director for Indiana's Republican House Speaker Todd Huston, confirmed to Vixio Gambling Compliance on Thursday (February 13) that the speaker does not expect House Bill 1432, which would legalize online lottery and casino games, to move forward this legislative session.

The bill passed out of the Indiana House Public Policy Committee in January by a 9-2 vote but has not yet received a hearing in the Ways and Means Committee.

“Opposition to iGaming is both misguided and misinformed, ignoring the realities of consumer demand and the benefits of a well-regulated online marketplace for the overall gaming ecosystem,” online gambling advocacy group iDEA said in a statement emailed to Vixio.

“Forming a group to oppose regulated online gaming does not change the fact that millions of Americans are already gambling online through illegal, unregulated operators that offer no consumer protections, responsible gaming safeguards, or tax contributions to the states.”

The real risk to consumers and state economies, iDEA argues, “is not the expansion of legal iGaming — it’s the unchecked growth of the illegal and unregulated online gaming market, which thrives in the absence of legal alternatives”.

Shannon McCracken, senior director of government relations at Churchill Downs, warned that iGaming is eroding communities.

“This isn’t just about responsible gaming; it’s about protecting local sustaining jobs and preventing financial harm,” she said.

The NAAIG study estimated legalized iGaming could cost Maryland \$372m in economic output, \$342.6m in lost casino revenue and nearly \$110m in annual wages by 2029.

The House Ways and Means Committee held a hearing on Monday (February 10) on House Bill 17, which was filed by the committee’s chair Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary.

On January 16, John Martin, director of the Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency, briefed the committee on the ongoing efforts to crack down on offshore sites.

Then on January 29, the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee held a hearing on Senate Bill 340, filed by Senator Ron Watson. Both Atterbeary and Watson are Democrats.

As of Thursday, neither HB 17 nor SB 340 have been voted on in committee.

Mark Stewart, executive vice president and general counsel with The Cordish Cos., testified at both hearings, expressing the company's strong opposition to legalizing iGaming in Maryland.

"We were together on this topic last year, but much is new since then," Stewart said. "There is a growing mountain of evidence against iGaming and its many harms.

"The real questions is what is the net tax impact and after accounting for full cannibalization of casinos, significant job losses, reduced economic output and increased social costs, much of which are not accounted for, the reality is no material new tax revenue for the state," Stewart said.

Stewart stressed that the answer to illegal gambling is "enforcement".

"We can bolster the attorney general's tools to reach web browsers, payment processors and others facilitating this illegal activity," he added. "Studies also show that legalizing iGaming does not stop the illegal market; in fact, many times it grows."

Atterbeary, who believes legal iGaming is needed to address the illegal market and generate tax revenue, expressed frustration with Stewart and Cordish, asking why, if the company is so opposed to iGaming, does it operate an online casino in Pennsylvania.

Stewart said that Cordish's position has been consistent in every state, including Pennsylvania.

He said it was important to note that Pennsylvania legalized iGaming prior to the opening of Cordish's land-based casino, and as a "gaming company we engaged in iGaming".

"It is a very different dynamic from what we have been saying here," Stewart said. "We don't think it is hypocritical at all. We stand to make a lot of money if iGaming is legalized. We will do very well but we think Maryland won't do very well and we know our employees won't do very well and that's why we are opposed to it."

Penn Entertainment is also opposed to both Maryland iGaming bills as they are currently written, but the ESPN Bet operator's concerns are not about cannibalization.

Sean Malone, vice president at Penn, told the Ways and Means Committee that the company would support the measures if an amendment was added granting iGaming licenses only to the six land-based casinos.

"We do participate in iGaming in other states," Malone said. "We would participate if licenses were given in Maryland. We are concerned about opening it up beyond the six licensed casinos in Maryland.

"Opening it up to entities beyond the current licensees, we think is problematic and certainly problematic for the brick-and-mortars," Malone added.