

REPORT OF THE

**Joint Subcommittee to Study the
Feasibility of Establishing the
Virginia Gaming Commission
(HJR 10, 2024)**

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



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Executive Summary

Joint Subcommittee to Study the Feasibility of Establishing the Virginia Gaming Commission

Executive Summary of 2025 Interim Activity

<https://studies.virginiageneralassembly.gov/studies/667>

Pursuant to the powers and duties authorized under HJR 10 (Krizek, 2024 Regular) and SJR 12 (Reeves, 2024 Regular), the Joint Subcommittee to Study the Feasibility of Establishing the Virginia Gaming Commission (the Joint Subcommittee) held two meetings during the 2025 interim with Senator Bryce E. Reeves, chair, and Delegate Paul E. Krizek, vice-chair, presiding. Materials presented at the meetings are accessible through the [Joint Subcommittee's meetings webpage](#).

The Joint Subcommittee's meetings occurred on August 19, 2025, and October 20, 2025.

Joint Subcommittee Members

Senator Bryce E. Reeves, Chair	Delegate Paul E. Krizek, Vice-Chair
Senator Adam P. Ebbin	Delegate Terry L. Austin
Senator Jeremy S. McPike	Delegate David L. Bulova
Senator Todd E. Pillion, Jr.	Delegate Luke E. Torian

August 19, 2025, Meeting

The Joint Subcommittee to Study the Feasibility of Establishing the Virginia Gaming Commission (the Joint Subcommittee) met in Richmond with Senator Bryce E. Reeves, chair, presiding.¹ The meeting began with opening remarks from the chair and vice-chair, Delegate Paul E. Krizek, followed by presentations and discussion. Materials presented at the meeting are accessible through the [*Joint Subcommittee's meetings webpage*](#).

Adoption of Virtual Meeting Policy

Delegate Krizek moved, and Senator Reeves seconded, to adopt a virtual meeting policy that is identical to the policy adopted by the Joint Subcommittee in 2024. The Joint Subcommittee unanimously voted to again adopt the policy.

Overview of HB 2171 (Simon, 2025)

Delegate Marcus B. Simon

Delegate Simon explained the provisions of his bill, [**HB 2171**](#), which would have authorized Internet gaming in the Commonwealth to be regulated by the Virginia Lottery Board (the Board). The bill's cognate, [**SB 827**](#) (Locke, 2025), was referred to the Joint Subcommittee by the Senate Committee on General Laws and Technology for further study. The bills, neither of which passed, permitted the Board to issue an Internet gaming operator license to a casino gaming operator that submits an application on forms approved by the Board, meets certain qualifications, and pays an application fee of \$1 million. The bills also set the tax rate at 15 percent of an Internet gaming operator's adjusted gross Internet gaming revenue with 2.5 percent of the tax revenues allocated to the Problem Gambling Treatment and Support Fund and the remaining 97.5 percent allocated to the general fund.

Delegate Simon provided background information on Internet gaming, also known as iGaming or iGambling, and noted that eight states have legalized iGaming, allowing about 14 percent of the U.S. adult population access to it. He explained that, in 2023, the legal iGaming market generated \$5.6 billion in gross gaming revenue and highlighted that Virginia could generate an additional \$5.3 billion in new taxable revenue over a five-year period from iGaming.

Presentation: Pros and Cons of iGaming and Problem Gambling Update

Keith Whyte, Founder and President, Safer Gambling Strategies, LLC

Mr. Whyte addressed the pros and cons of legalizing iGaming in Virginia, noting that a pro would be moving players out of the illegal online gaming market and a con would be that research shows that there is a higher risk of gambling problems in iGaming. He provided the following recommendations related to iGaming for a potential Virginia Gaming Commission (VGC): (i) adopt the National Council on Problem Gambling's Internet Responsible Gambling Standards as a baseline requirement for all online gambling, (ii) include all forms of online gambling in the VGC mandate, and (iii) appoint a VGC Director of Responsible Gambling.

Mr. Whyte also provided an update on problem gambling services in the Commonwealth, noting that between 2019 and 2024, total calls to the problem gambling helpline increased by 1,500 percent and intakes (actual calls for help) increased by 223 percent. He provided the following

¹ **Members Present:** Senator Bryce E. Reeves (chair), Delegate Paul E. Krizek (vice-chair), Senator Adam P. Ebbin, Senator Jeremy S. McPike, Delegate Terry L. Austin, Delegate David L. Bulova
Members Absent: Senator Todd E. Pillion, Delegate Luke E. Torian

recommendations related to problem gambling services for a potential VGC: (a) allocate VGC funds to research problem gambling and responsible gambling, (b) hold other state agencies accountable to gaming laws, and (c) include VGC representatives on the Problem Gambling Advisory Task Force.

Presentation: Challenges and Successes of iGaming Oversight in New Jersey

Dave Rebuck, Past Director, New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement

Mr. Rebuck provided testimony on his experience as the Director of New Jersey's Division of Gaming Enforcement, including what worked for successful iGaming oversight in New Jersey and what changes were found to be necessary, and he provided suggestions about what Virginia could learn from New Jersey as the Joint Subcommittee considers if and how to establish a VGC.

Presentation: Illicit iGaming Operations in Virginia and Its Impact on Other Forms of Gaming

Michelle MacGregor, Senior Policy Advisor, Sports Betting Alliance

Ms. MacGregor presented information on various aspects of iGaming, including the growth of the iGaming market and consumer sentiment, legal iGaming performance and the forecast for Virginia, insights into consumer behavior in states with both legalized iGaming and brick-and-mortar casinos, and consumer protections in the regulated iGaming market. She highlighted that legalizing iGaming in Virginia could generate an estimated \$5.3 billion in new taxable revenue over the first five years and that millions of dollars could be generated immediately from operator licensing fees.

Presentation: The Public Health Concerns of iGambling — Understanding the Social and Economic Impacts

Brianne Doura-Schawohl, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Doura-Schawohl Consulting, LLC

Ms. Doura-Schawohl discussed the public health concerns of iGambling. She noted that the national annual social cost of problem gambling is \$14 billion, that the National Council on Problem Gambling estimates 9 million American adults suffer from gambling addiction, and that there are currently no federal funds designated for problem gambling treatment or research, unlike the billions in funding designated to help treat and research alcohol, tobacco, and drug addiction. She also provided statistics on the problem gambling infrastructure in Virginia as well as statistics on problem gambling in New Jersey, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania.

Presentation: Comprehensive Look at iGaming

Dr. Brian Wyman, President and Chief Executive Officer, The Innovation Group

Dr. Wyman presented on iGaming's impacts on land-based gaming and its broader economic impacts and discussed responsible gaming. He noted that a recent study showed that iGaming reduces land-based gaming revenues by approximately 15 to 16 percent and said that the broader economic impacts related to legalized iGaming include reduced casino revenue as a result of reduced gaming tax, reduced casino spending on supplies with local vendors, reduced capital investment in casino property, and reduced visitation to casinos.

Dr. Wyman also noted the risk factors associated with iGaming, such as 24/7 access, the speed and intensity of iGaming, and the financial consequences of problem gaming, and presented key risk statistics related to online gaming.



October 20, 2025, Meeting

The Joint Subcommittee to Study the Feasibility of Establishing the Virginia Gaming Commission (the Joint Subcommittee) met in Richmond with Senator Bryce E. Reeves, chair, presiding.² The meeting began with opening remarks from the chair and vice-chair, Delegate Paul E. Krizek, followed by presentations and discussion. Materials presented at the meeting are accessible through the [*Joint Subcommittee's meetings webpage*](#).

Update: Casino Gaming Compliance

Khalid Jones, Executive Director, Virginia Lottery

Mr. Jones provided a casino regulatory overview and noted that five casinos have been approved to be constructed in the Commonwealth, with three currently operational, one with an upcoming licensure hearing, and one with an application pending and an ongoing licensure investigation. He reminded the Joint Subcommittee of the process for establishing a casino, including the requirement for a local referendum and timelines for application and licensure. Mr. Jones offered a breakdown of casino gaming taxes and data, noting how much revenue and taxes have been generated by the three operational casinos. He also provided an update on the current status of the Gaming Regulatory Fund, which he said currently has enough to cover operations, and noted that the license fee revenue is not sufficient for ongoing sustained operations.

Update: Hear from the Commonwealth's Current Casinos

Chris Albrecht, Senior Vice President and General Manager, Caesars Virginia

Allie Evangelista, President, Hard Rock Hotel and Casino Bristol

Antonio Perez, Jr., General Manager, Rivers Casino Portsmouth

Mr. Albrecht provided an update on the operations at Caesars Virginia in Danville, noting the economic impact the casino has had on the area, including revenue totals, taxes, and direct impact to Danville. He also highlighted the casino's contribution to the increase in tourism to Danville, local partnerships that have been established, and community impact through donations and volunteer efforts.

Ms. Evangelista provided an update on the operations at the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino Bristol, highlighting the employment opportunities provided by the hotel and casino and its community impact, including taxes generated, support to state and local business, philanthropy, and amount of visitors.

Mr. Perez provided an update on the operations at Rivers Casino Portsmouth, highlighting statistics on employment, current leadership, charitable donations and community involvement efforts, and measures to control problem gambling. He told the Joint Subcommittee that the main threat to the casino industry comes from illegal skill games and iGaming and noted that the hiring process for the casino is challenged by the application and background check process.

Update: Hear from the Commonwealth's Future Casinos

Ryan Soultz, Vice President of Governmental Affairs, Boyd Gaming

Kevin Krigsvold Chief Executive Officer and President, Pamunkey Indian Enterprises-

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Members Absent: Senator Todd E. Pillion

Professional Services

Rob Norton, President, Cordish Gaming Group

Mark Steward, Executive Vice President and General Counsel, The Cordish Companies

The Joint Subcommittee heard several presentations on the status of the future casinos in Norfolk and Petersburg and was provided with photographs of the construction process in Norfolk and the temporary facility currently in operation in Petersburg as well as architectural renderings of both properties. The presentations highlighted community engagement opportunities being led by Boyd Gaming and the Pamunkey Indian Tribe, including nonprofit partnerships, workforce development, and supplier diversity. The Joint Subcommittee was also provided with an explanation of iGaming, the negative impact it has on public health, and how states that have legalized iGaming have lost economic output.

Presentation: Proposed Convention and Entertainment Center in Winchester

W. Scott McGahey, William Scott McGahey Consulting

Jeff Buettner, Executive Director, Winchester Economic Development Authority

The Joint Subcommittee heard a presentation on the study that was conducted on behalf of the City of Winchester to determine the impact that a casino would have on the region and was provided with data related to projected regional job creation related to a casino. In addition, the City of Winchester formally requested that the General Assembly consider Winchester for a new casino operator's license at such time as the Joint Subcommittee determines is appropriate.

Presentation: Fairfax Grassroots Organizations

Sally Horn, Tysons Stakeholder Alliance

Chuck Anderson, No Fairfax Casino Coalition

Ms. Horn stated that every region in Fairfax County opposes a casino in Tysons and presented data to support her statement. She highlighted that the Tysons Stakeholder Alliance supports the establishment of the Virginia Gaming Commission to consistently regulate existing and future gambling and to establish funding mechanisms to mitigate harm from gambling. She also presented the Joint Subcommittee with recommendations from the Tysons Stakeholder Alliance related to allocation of gaming tax revenues, community input on new casinos, and a cost-benefit study to be conducted by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission.

Mr. Anderson provided information on behalf of the No Fairfax Casino Coalition, including the organization's primary objections to the construction of a casino in Fairfax County. He added that the potential costs of a casino to the Tysons area would outweigh any increased tax revenues and job growth, explained the importance of the local referendum component to the casino approval process, and stressed the need for localities to be involved in any land-use decisions within their borders.

Public Comment

Public comment was limited to the subject of casino gaming.



For more information, see the [*Joint Subcommittee's website*](#) or contact the Division of Legislative Services staff:

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