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The MICHIGAN GAMING Newsletter



Jim Ananich Appointed Chair of the Michigan Gaming Control Board

According to a press [release](#) issued by the Michigan Gaming Control Board ("MGCB"), Governor Gretchen Whitmer has appointed Jim Ananich of Flint as the new Chair of the MGCB, effective April 25, 2025. Ananich succeeds Linda Forte and will serve through December 31, 2028, representing Democrats on the Board. His appointment is pending confirmation by the Michigan Senate.

"Jim Ananich is a proven leader with a long-standing commitment to public service and the people of Michigan," said Henry Williams, Executive Director of the MGCB. "His legislative experience, strategic insight, and collaborative approach make him exceptionally well-suited to lead the Board as we continue our mission to ensure the integrity of gaming in Michigan."

Ananich is President and CEO of the Greater Flint Health Coalition and a lecturer at the University of Michigan-Flint. His public service includes roles as Michigan Senate Minority Leader, State Representative, and Flint City Council President. He holds degrees from Michigan State University and the University of Michigan and serves on the National Kidney Foundation of Michigan's Advisory Board.

"On behalf of the entire Board and staff, I also want to thank Linda Forte for her steady leadership and dedicated service over the past several years," Williams added. "Her guidance has been instrumental in navigating the evolving gaming landscape and expanding our commitment to responsible gaming."

Ananich joins current Board members Joni M. Thrower Davis, Mark Evenson, Deidre A. Lambert-Bounds, and Andrew T. Palms. The MGCB's next public meeting is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, May 13, 2025, at Cadillac Place in Detroit.

MGCB Public Meeting Notice Tuesday, May 13, 2025

Michigan Gaming Control Board ("MGCB") released a [public notice](#) of their upcoming public meeting.

The meeting will take place at the Cadillac Place Office, 3062 W. Grand Blvd., Suite L-700, Detroit, MI 48202-6062 on Tuesday, May 13,, 2025 at 9:30am EST. The meeting also be available via [zoom](#) at <https://zoom.us/j/94662530938>.

To join via telephone, use the information below:

USA 646 931 3860

Webinar ID: 946 6235 0938

To participate in public comment during the meeting, during which attendees are welcome to ask questions and voice comments, submit a [Public Sign In Sheet Form](#) to MGCBweb@michigan.com by 9:30am on March 4th.

The agenda for the upcoming meeting is available here. For additional meeting details, please refer to "[Board Meeting Schedule and Agendas](#)"

Michigan Gaming Control Board Raises Concerns to CFTC About Risks of Sporting Event Contracts in Michigan

The Michigan Gaming Control Board ("MGCB") has [raised](#) serious concerns to the Commodity Futures Trading Commission ("CFTC") regarding the offering of "sporting event contracts" by CFTC-regulated entities. In a formal letter to Acting Chairperson Caroline Pham, MGCB Executive Director Henry Williams warned that these contracts—financial wagers on sports outcomes—are effectively internet sports bets and must comply with Michigan's Lawful Sports Betting Act ("LSBA").

"The offering of sporting event contracts by CFTC-regulated entities, without adherence to Michigan's licensing requirements and in a manner that may not meet prescribed consumer protections, exposes Michigan residents to unnecessary risk and undermines public trust," said Williams. "We are particularly concerned that such contracts are being promoted as investment opportunities, a message that directly contradicts Michigan's responsible gaming principles."

The MGCB outlined several legal requirements for internet sports betting in Michigan, including strict licensing, robust responsible gaming measures, consumer protections, and event integrity protocols. Operators must be licensed, vetted, and compliant with state oversight, and must offer tools like self-exclusion programs and secure patron fund protections.

The Board also warned of potential financial impacts. Diverting wagering from licensed operators could reduce revenue for state, local, and tribal governments. In 2024 alone, legal sports betting contributed over \$20 million in taxes and fees to fund public services and responsible gaming initiatives.

“The potential for financial harm to both consumers and government programs is real,” added Williams. “Any erosion of the legal, regulated sports betting market undermines the very safeguards we have in place to protect Michiganders.”

The MGCB urged the CFTC to take these concerns into account as it evaluates the public interest in sporting event contracts.

MGCB Orders 26 Illegal Gambling Operators, Including BetUS, to Cease Operations in Michigan

The Michigan Gaming Control Board (MGCB) has issued cease-and-desist orders to 26 unlicensed online gambling operators—including major offshore site BetUS and 25 other illegal casinos—accused of unlawfully targeting Michigan residents.

“These sites are operating illegally and without proper oversight, putting Michigan players at risk,” said MGCB Executive Director Henry Williams. “We’re committed to shutting down unlicensed gambling operations and protecting the public from deceptive practices, unfair play, and financial harm.”

14 Offshore Operators Receive Orders

On May 9, the MGCB has [issued](#) cease-and-desist orders to 14 unlicensed offshore gambling operators targeting Michigan residents. These platforms, including BetFlip, BetMania, and Casino Castle, have been

found offering internet gaming and sports betting without the necessary state approvals.

“These sites operate in the shadows of the law, offering no guarantees to players,” said Henry Williams, MGCB Executive Director. “Our enforcement efforts are relentless, and we will continue to take action against illegal gambling operations that jeopardize Michigan residents.”

BetUS Among Targeted Operators

On May 7, the MGCB [ordered](#) BetUS, a Costa Rica-based platform, to stop offering internet sports betting and casino-style games in Michigan. Although licensed in the Comoros Union, BetUS lacks approval to operate in the state and violated multiple Michigan laws.

“Unlicensed operators like BetUS undermine the integrity of Michigan’s regulated gaming market and expose consumers to potential risks,” said Williams.

11 Other Casinos Also Flagged

Earlier in April, the MGCB [issued](#) similar orders to platforms including Club Player Casino, Bookmaker.eu, and Prism Casino. These sites were found to use unregulated payment methods and posed significant risks to consumers' financial and personal data.

“This should serve as a strong warning to illegal operators: Michigan does not tolerate unauthorized gambling activity,” Williams added.

All 12 operators have 14 days to comply or face further legal action. Residents are encouraged to report suspicious gambling activity by calling 1-888-314-2682 or emailing MIGamblingTip@michigan.gov.

“We want every patron in Michigan to have access to a fair and secure gambling experience,” said Williams. “By eliminating illegal operators, we’re helping ensure the public can enjoy gaming without fear of fraud or abuse.”

court costs, a crime victim assessment, and a monthly probation oversight fee.

Southfield Man Sentenced After Pleading Guilty to Felony Gambling Charge

According to a [press release](#) issued by the Michigan Gaming Control Board (“MGCB”), Jeffrey Saco, 38, of Southfield, has been sentenced after pleading guilty to a felony gambling charge for exploiting a vulnerability in Caesars Entertainment’s mobile sportsbook platform, making over \$2 million in fake deposits and placing nearly 10,000 bets totaling more than \$88 million between April and May 2023.

Following a joint investigation by the MGCB and the Michigan Attorney General’s Office, Saco pled guilty to one count of illegal gambling activity, a 10-year felony. As part of a plea deal, he has begun making restitution payments, including an initial \$25,000 and \$2,500 monthly over 36 months of probation. He also received a 90-day jail sentence, with most of it suspended pending compliance, and is attending Gamblers Anonymous.

“This plea agreement is an important step in ensuring that individuals who violate state gaming regulations are held accountable for their actions,” said MGCB Executive Director Henry Williams. “We will continue to work closely with the Michigan Attorney General’s Office and industry partners to maintain the integrity of Michigan’s gaming industry.”

Saco originally faced eight felony charges, including computer crimes and larceny by conversion. His financial penalties also include