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Contact: [MGCB-Media@michigan.gov](mailto:MGCB-Media@michigan.gov)



## **Gaming Control Board executive director takes firm stance on illegal gaming operations at international gaming law conference**



*Michigan Gaming Control Board Executive Director Henry Williams, pictured second from left, recently participated in a panel discussion with regulators from around the world at the International Masters of Gaming Law 2024 Spring Conference in Tampa, Fla. (Photo courtesy of IMGL)*

DETROIT, April 17, 2024 — At the recent [International Masters of Gaming Law \(IMGL\) 2024 Spring Conference](#) that took place in the Tampa Bay area, Michigan's top gaming regulator made the state's approach to dismantling illegal gaming operations both domestically and offshore very clear.

Representing the U.S. last Friday, April 12, during a panel discussion moderated by Florida Gaming Control Commission Executive Director Lou Trombetta, Michigan Gaming Control Board Executive Director Henry Williams participated in a conversation centered around the need to balance the goals of regulating with the realities of the gaming industry. His participation at the IMGL conference

underscored his commitment to upholding the rule of Michigan’s gaming laws and ensuring a fair and ethical gaming environment.

By actively engaging with global regulatory counterparts and advocating for stronger regulatory measures, Williams echoed the need to combat illegal gaming operations on a global scale and shared how Michigan is doing its part to protect the integrity of the gaming industry.

“If people choose to ignore the law and don’t do what’s legal, we’re going to find them and hold them accountable for their actions,” MGCB Executive Director Henry Williams said. “In Michigan, the Michigan Gaming Control Board has made it a priority to do everything we can to protect our state’s citizens from illegal gambling market operators and our legitimate gaming industry from being tarnished by its illegal counterparts. We have a zero-tolerance policy towards illegal gaming activities.”

In 2023, [as a result of MGCB investigations](#) and in partnership with the Michigan Attorney General’s Office, 79 machines used for illegal gambling were seized, nine individuals received criminal gambling convictions, and 24 individuals were arraigned on illegal gambling charges.

In addition to highlighting the significance of regulatory frameworks that promote transparency, accountability, and compliance within the gaming sector, Williams also emphasized the importance of collaboration among global stakeholders to combat the growing menace of offshore illegal gaming operations. Other speakers who participated in the panel discussion hailed from Malta, Belgium, Canada, and the country of Georgia in Eastern Europe. They collectively shared their perspectives based on experience within their respective jurisdictions, with a particular focus on modern-day communications and technologies that continue to present different regulatory challenges than land-based casino gaming.

Earlier this year, [the MGCB sent cease-and-desist letters to three online gaming companies](#), two in the U.S. and one overseas, after investigations revealed that they were offering online gaming in Michigan without the proper licenses to do so legally.

The MGCB encourages the public to report alleged illegal gambling by contacting the agency at 1-888-314-2682 or sending a message to [MIGamblingTip@michigan.gov](mailto:MIGamblingTip@michigan.gov).

*Gambling in any form is for entertainment purposes only. If you or someone you know may have a gambling problem, contact the National Problem Gambling Helpline, which offers hope and help without stigma or shame. Call **1-800-GAMBLER**, text 800GAM, or visit [www.1800gamblerchat.org](http://www.1800gamblerchat.org). Help is available 24/7 and is free and confidential. Michigan citizens can also visit the [Responsible Gaming page of the MGCB website](#) for information on self-exclusion programs including the Disassociated Persons List and the Internet Gaming and Sports Betting Responsible Gaming Database, and [DontRegretTheBet.org](http://DontRegretTheBet.org) for additional tools to game responsibly.*

*The Michigan Gaming Control Board shall ensure the conduct of fair and honest gaming to protect the interests of the citizens of the state of Michigan. Learn more at [Michigan.gov/MGCB](http://Michigan.gov/MGCB).*