Chapter 16 — Regulated Readiness & Legislative Watch

Purpose: The endgame plan. Everything in this binder points at regulated online poker; this chapter tracks how far away that is, what the landscape will look like on arrival, and what "ready on day one" means. Facts verified August 2026.

16.1 Where Massachusetts Actually Stands

- Three bills existed in the 2025–26 session: S.235 (Feeney) / H.332 (Cahill) (up to 10 skins, 20% tax) and H.4431 (Muradian) (9 online casinos, 15% tax, MGC oversight — plus the sweeps ban).
- All of it died in March 2026: the Joint Committee voted 11-0 to send H.4431 "to study." Nothing can pass before the 2027–28 session; Muradian has said he'll re-file.
- The opposition, named: Treasurer Deborah Goldberg (protecting Lottery revenue — the suspicion about lottery lobbying is documented fact), Wynn/Encore (protecting the Everett casino floor), labor unions, and a growing anti-online-gambling bloc (Sen. Keenan). DraftKings, headquartered in Boston, is the main force pushing for it.
- The wildcard: Mass Lottery Online (iLottery) launched July 27, 2026. Its revenue numbers become the Treasurer's argument — either "we don't need iGaming" or "online works, regulate the rest." Watch those quarterly reports.
- Realistic timeline: 2027 passage is possible but not favored; 2028 is the honest planning number. Launch would follow passage by ~a year.

16.2 What the Regulated Map Looks Like (Aug 2026)

- MSIGA members (6): Nevada, Delaware, New Jersey, West Virginia, Michigan, Pennsylvania (joined April 2025).
- Shared-liquidity networks:
- WSOP Online — the only 4-state pool (NV+NJ+MI+PA); ran a 30-event, $7M online bracelet series across all four in 2026.
- PokerStars on FanDuel — Flutter merged its US poker into the FanDuel brand; MI+NJ+PA pooled April 1, 2026, with a $1M-guaranteed Sunday Million.
- BetMGM Poker — NJ+MI+PA tri-state.
- If MA passes: ~7M people, DraftKings' home turf, MGC already runs online sports betting. MA would be the seventh member and second-largest. Precedent (MI ~1 year, PA ~5 years) says expect a lag between legalization and pooled liquidity — shared pools realistically 2028+ even in the good scenario. Note: none of the MA bills explicitly addressed poker compacts; that fight happens in rulemaking.

16.3 The Readiness Checklist

Being ready on day one is a real edge — early regulated pools are at their softest in the first year while the recreational wave is in.

- Game: Move-Up Readiness Test (Chapter 11) passed at current stake; 100k+ logged hands of sweeps volume; leak list current.
- Bankroll: Phase targets from 13.7 hit, with a dedicated deposit fund ready — day-one deposit bonuses will be everywhere and are actually worth clearing at launch.
- Records: The Chapter 14 log archive migrates straight into PokerTracker-era workflows. Buy PT4/HM3 at launch, not before.
- Accounts: KYC will need ID, SSN, proof of address — have clean copies ready. Register early; launch-day queues are real.
- Geography note: regulated play requires being physically in a legal state. NJ (~4 hours) and PA are drivable from Boston — a deliberate "geo-trip" weekend to experience regulated pool speed is a legitimate scouting expense once the bankroll supports it. Not before.

16.4 The Watch List (check quarterly)

1. Bill refile — January 2027, new session opens: did Muradian/Feeney/Cahill re-file, and to which committee?
2. Committee movement — hearings scheduled = signal; another "sent to study" = dead again.
3. iLottery revenue reports — the Treasurer's ammunition, either direction.
4. Sweeps legal climate — any MA AG action or new ban bill touching sweeps poker (this is also the Chapter 12 platform-risk trigger).
5. MSIGA growth — Connecticut and Rhode Island are the next likely members; each addition raises the value of MA eventually joining.
6. DraftKings poker signals — DK has no poker product today; any DK poker acquisition or launch in other states hints at what a MA market would look like.

One-line rule: the strategy doesn't wait for the law. Every month of disciplined sweeps grinding is banked skill and banked bankroll that transfers on day one — the legislation only decides when the payoff window opens.