

## Testimony in Support of LD 1490

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Good morning Sen. Hickman, Rep. Supica and other distinguished members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee. I am here in support of LD 1490 as proposed by my Senator Nicole Grohoski.

This proposed bill restores the ability of Non-Profits to play "Progressive Pull Tab Games". These games carry a guaranteed prize and a chance at a "Jackpot Prize" which, if not won, carries over to the new game and builds up until someone wins the Jackpot. Because of a new interpretation or discovery of a lack of specific wording by the MEDPS Gambling Control Unit, they stopped NPO's from playing these games. NPO's have been playing progressive games for at least 25 years or more with no problems and then couldn't. I know of one NPO that only played one type of progressive game at their bingo hall. They would sell, I was told 2-4 boxes/games a night during bingo play. That loss of revenue for this fire department could easily result in a loss of \$500.00 or more in revenue every night. Progressive games, because the jackpots can and do increase in size, create an atmosphere of excitement for players that is different from regular pull tab games. Restoring the ability to play these games is essential to the viability of many NPO's. There is also a large amount of costly inventory sitting out there at the retail and wholesale level that cannot be used.

The "Partner Assisted Bingo" part of this proposal is sort of a feel good measure. What it will do is allow many seniors as well as those with cognitive decline or physical disabilities, such as vision loss, to be able to come play bingo with a family member or caretaker and be able to not only play bingo but to be able make contact with old friends or rekindle relationships or just plain get out of the house and stop being a shut in. There is nothing like the thrill of being able to yell "BINGO" to raise one's spirits. Neither of these proposals carry any cost to the State budget.

The third part of this proposal attempts to codify “Gambling Expansion Review Procedures”. There are proposals out there to bring in “Virtual Pull Tab Machines” to NPO’s by out of state vendors with large portions of the revenues going to those vendors. We currently have a system that works just fine. Players purchase pull tab tickets, take them back to their seats and open them. Making it easier to spend large sums of money very quickly is an easy way for someone to overspend. It is also not possible to pull a handle on a machine and play bingo at the same time which, I feel could result in bingo players taking their money to parlors where only virtual machines reside and quickly losing all of their money, which would endanger many small nonprofits who count on a combination of sealed ticket revenue and bingo revenue to survive. It is critical that the gaming expansion review process be meticulous and be looked at on an actuarial basis to make sure that there is no shifting of wealth from the NPO’s who struggle daily to survive to out of state entities who only care about their pocketbooks.

The public has a limited amount of money to spend on legal gambling. This thoughtful proposal by Sen. Grohoski will help ensure that whatever gambling legislation that is proposed will be thoroughly vetted so that it will not undermine the economic viability of NPO’s small or large in the State of Maine. Thank you to this committee for your time and thoughtful consideration of this important proposal.