

Diane Dickerson
Bangor Region YMCA
LD 1902

My name is Diane Dickerson, and I am the CEO of the Bangor Region YMCA. I am submitting this written testimony in opposition to LD 1902.

As the leader of a nonprofit organization committed to strengthening families and improving health and well-being in our community, I understand the importance of fundraising and sustaining mission-driven work. I also understand why the sponsors of this legislation want to create new tools to support nonprofit organizations. However, I believe LD 1902 is not the right path forward, because it would expand electronic gaming in a way that risks harming an established employer and community partner in Bangor.

Hollywood Casino Bangor has long been a responsible and engaged member of our community. Like many organizations in this region, the Bangor Region YMCA values relationships with employers and businesses that create opportunities for local residents and contribute to the overall stability of our economy. Hollywood Casino has operated within a strict regulatory framework and has demonstrated that gaming can be conducted responsibly. We should not take legislative action that could jeopardize the long-term health of that business or weaken the role it plays in our local economy.

The casino also provides roughly 300 jobs — jobs that support families, contribute to workforce stability, and help keep Bangor strong. These are real livelihoods. In a region where good jobs matter deeply, we should be cautious about creating new forms of gaming that could dilute the customer base for existing facilities and place those jobs at risk.

Not only is Hollywood Casino a fabulous partner of our Y from a donor and activity standpoint, but we serve its employees with our Early Childhood Education Program, our Before and After School Program, our Teen Center, our Camps, and our Health and Fitness programs. In other words, if these people's jobs are impacted in any way, it will have a further negative impact on our Y.

Finally, Maine has historically treated major gaming decisions with the seriousness they deserve. Expansions of gaming have required a clear public process and voter approval, and that approach has helped maintain public trust and accountability. If Maine is going to consider an expansion of gaming that introduces slot-style electronic devices beyond the existing regulated casino structure, it should be held to the same standard and process as previous gaming decisions.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to oppose LD 1902.

With appreciation for your service and consideration,
Diane Dickerson
CEO, Bangor Region YMCA