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Legislative Testimony
Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee
Milton F. Champion III – Executive Director
Gambling Control Unit
Department of Public Safety
April 14 2025, 9:30 am, Room 437, State House

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and Distinguished Members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee, I am Milton Champion, Executive Director of the Gambling Control Unit within the Department of Public Safety. I am here today on behalf of the Department of Public Safety to testify “Against” LD 1490 which is “An Act to Allow Nonprofit organizations to Sell Progressive Pull-tab Games and to Offer Partner-assisted Beano and to Establish New Guidelines for the Expansion of Gambling.”

This bill requires review and evaluation of any proposal to authorize new for-profit gambling in the State or to expand existing authorized for-profit gambling in the State. Following a public hearing on such a proposal, and if a majority of the joint standing committee of jurisdiction supports the proposal, the proposal must be submitted to the Gambling Control Board and the Gambling Control Unit within the Department of Public Safety for review and evaluation of the financial impact that the proposal would have on eligible nonprofit organizations licensed or registered to conduct games of chance. The Legislature may not enact into law any such proposal unless the proposal is reviewed and evaluated by the Gambling Control Board and the Gambling Control Unit and determined to have no negative financial impact on eligible nonprofit organizations licensed or registered to conduct games of chance.

The bill authorizes partner-assisted beano, as long as the partnered pair plays no more than 18 tally cards per game.

The bill also defines "lucky seven or similar sealed ticket games," which is a game of chance, and clarifies that lucky seven or similar sealed ticket games include so-called progressive pull-tab games, which are games designed by the manufacturer to include a jackpot prize that is carried over to a subsequent series of tickets or cards with the same form number in the event that jackpot prize is not won.

This bill asks for a review by the Gambling Control Unit and Gambling Control Board. Charitable Non-profit gambling is regulated by the Gambling Control Unit which was transferred from the Maine State Police in 2017. During any bill presented to the committee it is reviewed and evaluated by the Gambling Control Unit and in some cases the Chairman of the Gambling Control Board does weigh in on behalf of the Board. As such, any review is completed by the Gambling Control Unit. The Gambling Control Board regulates two brick and mortar casinos and advance deposit wagering. The Gambling Control Unit or Executive Director regulates Charitable Gaming, Fantasy Contests and Sports Wagering. The Gambling Control Unit has spent the last seven years educating charitable organizations on how to capitalize on the sales or offers of games of chance and bingo. Charitable gaming is the most time-consuming as we get daily email and phone inquiries regarding law, rules or our assistance to provide the best opportunities for positive financial impacts. Charitable law has long been picked apart and as such we agree that a sub-committee would be appropriate to go through the current law and bring it up to date. New technologies allow for opportunities for better securing and regulating some games of chance such as sealed tickets.

This bill already allows assistance for players under §329. Assistance for player, which states: A person conducting or assisting in the conduct of beano may assist a player by playing that player's cards while the player takes a restroom break. This section does not apply to the conduct of high-stakes beano. There is no way to regulate the addition of "no more than 18 tally cards per game."

The seal ticket machines should start out without progressive games until we get through the initial stages of operating sealed ticket machines. These machines would not be an expansion, but rather a replacement to sell sealed tickets by hand or mechanical devices that have proven to be harder to regulate when human interaction is used.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee today, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.

Respectfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "M. G." followed by a stylized flourish.