



**HOUSE BILL 344 – (REGARDS ELECTRONIC INSTANT BINGO, LOTTERY TERMINALS; LEVY A TAX)  
WRITTEN PROPONENT TESTIMONY- OHIO HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE  
JUNE 17, 2025**

Chairman Stewart and Members of the Ohio House Finance Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the nearly 21,000 governing members of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), and particularly those in the entertainment and hospitality industries, to offer comments on House Bill 344.

Founded in 1943, NFIB is the state and nation's largest small business advocacy organization, dedicated to representing the interests of small, independent, and family-owned businesses. Our members employ an average of 15 or fewer, come from all industry sectors, and each of Ohio's 88 counties. NFIB's mission is to promote and protect the right of our members to own, operate, and grow their businesses.

As we have stated in previous testimony submitted to both this committee and the Ohio Senate Select Committee on Gaming, it has been our view that if the Ohio General Assembly desires to expand gaming options in the state, we encourage inclusion of retail brick-and-mortar establishments in any potential expansion.

HB 344 would enable this inclusion by granting Ohio small businesses such as bowling alleys, bars, restaurants, and convenience stores, etc. the opportunity to offer video lottery terminal (VLT) machines if they choose. Additionally, bars and restaurants with a class D liquor permit will be allowed to offer e-bingo if contracted with a 501(C) (3) charitable organization acting as the sponsor. Under the legislation, those establishments who choose to apply for a VLT license are limited to three machines in year one and a total of five machines thereafter. The bill outlines strict regulations regarding the placement of the machines, mandates video and staff surveillance at all times, and ensures criminal penalties for violations surrounding use of these machines. All entities engaged in the manufacture, distribution, operation and of these machines will have to be licensed by the state and pay licensure fees. All state proceeds from VLTs will be dedicated solely to the Lottery Profits Education Fund.

It is important that our small businesses, many of which have been serving their respective communities for decades, be given the chance to offer additional entertainment opportunities if gaming is expanded in Ohio. Small businesses know their customers, so while we expect a number of businesses to take advantage of these new gaming options, we know that each proprietor will make an assessment about offering these machines and whether it is right for them and their customers. We welcome a stringent review of this language to ensure the committee and the legislature are comfortable as possible with the final product, as we recognize the significance of this

measure. Thank you for considering our perspective and we appreciate the committee's thorough review of this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Cameron J. Garczyk". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C' and 'G'.

Cameron J. Garczyk  
Ohio Assistant State Director  
614-221-4107