

**Testimony of Joe Poelking, Owner
Poelking Lanes – Dayton, Ohio
Senate Select Committee on Gaming
Wednesday, March 10, 2021**

Chairman Schuring, Vice Chair Manning and members of the Senate Select Committee on Gaming, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today regarding gaming – specifically Sports Betting and e-Bingo.

My name is Joe Poelking and I am a 3rd generation bowling proprietor. Our bowling centers are located in the Dayton area – one in Dayton (Poelking Lanes); one in Miami Township (Poelking Lanes South); and one in Kettering (Poelking Woodman Lanes). My three centers employ approximately 80 people.

Over the years we've seen the ups and downs in our family business. Back in the 60's and 70's our business thrived, we had multi-shift league bowlers bowling all day and night. It was a place for family, friends and co-workers to gather.

Since then, we have seen a decline in league bowling and have struggled to find other ways to continue to keep our business moving forward. It's been especially challenging since the introduction of the 4 Ohio casinos, slot machines in Ohio's 7 horserace tracks and e-Gaming devices in fraternal clubs. So, as times continue to change, we think Ohio's small businesses need to be a part of that change and be more relevant to our customers. The ability to be able to offer additional entertainment options has become a key factor in our business. This is evident by our continued strong relationship with the Ohio Lottery, especially since the addition of KENO Kiosks in our locations. In fact, more recently, we have seen an uptick with our customers playing KENO Kiosks. They are coming in a little earlier before bowling to grab a bite to eat and play a couple of KENO games, with some staying afterward to play KENO and hang out with their friends.

Due to our strong partnership with the Ohio Lottery that has spanned decades, we think it only makes good business sense that you DON'T handcuff the Lottery by prohibiting them from offering sports betting through the KENO Kiosks that we already operate safely and

securely in our bowling centers. We have shown that we can generate millions of dollars for education funding and want to continue to be a part of that strong partnership with low stakes wagering for a KENO Kiosk bet. Sports gaming would create a much needed “boost” to our businesses. A “boost” that we could use in order to keep our patrons in our bowling centers a little longer. It’s a win-win for the state and small Ohio businesses. Plus, if you’re going to allow mobile sports betting, why wouldn’t you help us combat the potential of even more people NOT coming in to our establishments? It just doesn’t seem small business friendly to us. We also believe the charities that we currently work with that sell instant pull-tabs in our locations should also have the same opportunity to modernize their paper pull-tab systems with e-Bingo. I know the charities spend an inordinate amount of time with the administrative aspects of paper instant tickets pursuant to the Ohio Attorney General’s rules, so modernizing that to e-Bingo would help them immensely comply and generate much needed funds for the charitable operations they support.

So, we respectfully request that, in any legislation that you craft, it should include the opportunity to offer Sports Betting on Lottery Kiosks and charitable e-Bingo in our locations. By allowing us to be a part of these exciting new forms of entertainment, it would be a win-win for Ohio’s small family-owned hospitality businesses, the Ohio Lottery and K-12 Education.

Again, thank you for this opportunity and I’ll try to answer any questions you may have at this time.