

**Testimony of Todd Reveron
Veterans of Foreign Wars & VFW Ohio Charities
To the Ohio Senate Select Committee on Gaming**

Chairman Schuring, Vice Chairman Manning, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the committee:

My Name is Todd Reveron and I am the Executive Director of the VFW Ohio Charities. I am also State President of the VFW Ohio Riders and Sr. Vice Commander of VFW Post 3320 in Marysville, OH, on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Dept. of Ohio, I would like thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Electronic Instant Bingo.

I want to take a moment to address longevity. We have heard some testify that they have been in the gaming business for decades. The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has been in the business of taking care of Veterans, their families and their communities for over a century. Our organization was founded in September 1899 by thirteen members of the Cuban Campaign of the Spanish American War who first met in a Tailor shop in Columbus Ohio. What we do, our mission, has not changed for over 121 years. How we do it will always change in order to keep up with the times, to include embracing technology.

The intent of electronic instant bingo legislation, drafted in collaboration with the Ohio Attorney General's office, is to codify into law the use of electronic as well as paper instant bingo.

We have heard our opponents, casinos and racinos, testify that our modernization from instant pull tab tickets to electronic instant bingo, is a transformation of gaming in Ohio. This is just not true! Charitable bingo has existed in Ohio since 1975. Instant bingo has existed in Ohio since 2003. This legislation merely adopts the electronic format of the same game.

Casinos and racinos say that authorizing electronic instant bingo will hurt their businesses. I would like to remind everyone that the Veteran and Fraternal organizations have been conducting electronic machines in our posts and clubs for over a decade. In fact, we have been raising money via charitable gaming to support our charitable mission since long before casinos even existed in this state! And to our knowledge, no casino or racino has laid off employees or closed as a result.

Our opponents have also misrepresented the differences between electronic instant bingo machines and slot machines.

For this I would like to quote Nationally recognized Gaming Expert Mark Newton:

“Electronic pull tab devices are defined and certified for use in various jurisdictions within the united states. Most regulations have stipulations that these devices do not resemble a “slot machine” which are otherwise prohibited under state constitutions and must be specifically exempted when authorized for use. So how can we tell them apart when both devices have similar physical characteristics such as electronic screens, bill acceptors, player controls touch screens, locked cabinets etc.? The primary difference, and arguably the only difference of substance is the nature of the gaming itself.

Slot machines traditionally contain a Random Number Generator (RNG) within the device itself, whether software or hardware based, which is called upon by the player to generate the result of the game. Each press of the play button activates the RNG whose operation selects one of potentially millions of programmed outcomes.

These programmed outcomes vary in value and frequency and can be structured to deliver varying “theoretical payouts” differentiating one device from another.

For illustrative purposes think of the RNG generated outcomes as 52 cards in a standard deck, each time the player presses play the cards are shuffled and one predefined card face is presented to the player. The RNG shuffles the entire deck for each player selected event so every time the button is pressed the cards are shuffled and one is selected for that game instance. If a payer plays the game 52 times it is possible that they may obtain the identical outcome (a particular card) 52 times. This is an example of “infinite gaming” wherein the device is designed to operate an infinite number of times.

Electronic Pull tab Devices, while incorporating similar components work in a wholly separate manner and deliver a different gaming experience.

Electronic Pull Tab devices do not contain an RNG nor are any outcomes determined by the play of the device itself. Game designers create *deals* of outcomes that vary in size containing a few thousand or a few tens of thousands of *tickets*. These deals are manufactured off site and delivered in a rerandomized and encrypted format to the location’s server for access by each device within the facility. This absence of a RNG on the device is one of two primary differentiators between the devices, the other being that electronic pull tabs are finite.

Finite gaming is best illustrated by the deck of cards analogy, the deck of predefined card faces is shuffled off site and secured so no one knows the precise location of any individual card, and as the player presses the play button the next card in the deck is dealt to the player. This process is repeated until the deck is exhausted with every card being allocated to the players. This results in an entirely different gaming proposition. The players **know**, what the contents of the deck are prior to playing as all outcomes including their frequency are presented to the player prior to play, and if a player plays the game 52 times, they will obtain each and every card available.”

End Quote

One thing that we all agree about is that all gaming in Ohio should be highly regulated. The Attorney General’s office has stringently regulated all charitable gaming in Ohio for many years. Language in HB282 would have allowed the Attorney General to audit and even turn off the machines in real time. The income they receive from Charitable Gaming licensing fees covers a large percentage of their budget. That is why we believe the AG’s office is best suited to continue to oversee Charitable Gaming in Ohio.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, casinos and racinos are opposing veterans supporting our warrior’s and our communities in lieu of their wealthy investors! That is really too bad.

you have heard veterans’ organizations and charities testify to all the good that comes from our Charitable Gaming. This is truly a matter of GOOD vs GREED. The GOOD is the hundreds of non-profits who support and help run our communities and the charities and charitable programs to whom they donate. Many of these nonprofits would not have the funding to continue their work but for the support they receive from our organizations. The GREED is seen in the for-profit casinos and racinos, and their wealthy shareholders who believe that we cannot co-exist.

I would now like to share with you a few examples of where the VFW Ohio Charities donate funds raised by Charitable Gaming.

In 2019 we have donated:

\$948,961 to Youth Programs such as Community sports and safety programs, schools and scouting programs, Scholarships, 4-H and Toys for Tots.

\$644,816 back to Communities through various sponsorships like Food Pantries, Faith Organizations, Salvation Army, Agricultural Societies, County Fairs, Museums, Historical Societies, Humane Societies, Homeless Outreach, Municipal Services and Meals on Wheels

\$515,800 to Veterans in Need for items such as Housing, Auto Repair, Medical Supplies, Utilities, Food and Basic Necessities.

\$220,347 on Medical Research and awareness including, VA Hospitals, Hospice programs, American heart Assoc., Muscular Dystrophy, Autism Awareness, St. Jude's, Make a Wish Foundation, Ronald McDonald House and Combs Comedy Cancer Fund.

\$163, 247 to First Responders

\$82, 571 to VFW National Home for Children

These are some examples from just one of the Vets and Fraternal organizations, combined those numbers raise exponentially.

In closing, I want to highlight that the backbones of our organizations are "Volunteers!" We do this not for personal gain, monetary or otherwise, but to fulfill our commitment to take care of those that have served, those that are currently serving, their families and their communities. By passing this legislation you will help ensure we have the resources to continue funding our charitable service programs by allowing veteran and fraternal organizations the ability to play electronic instant bingo. Thank you again Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to provide testimony. My testimony brings to a close input from the Veterans of Foreign Wars to this committee however, we stand ready to provide any additional information this committee may require in the future. I am happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.