

OHIO CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION



Mike DeWine
Governor

June E. Taylor
Chair

January 27, 2020

Chairman John Eklund
Senate Judiciary Committee
1 Capitol Square, 1st Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Eklund:

Please accept my sincere gratitude for your introduction of the amendment to Sub. H.B. 236, which adds Casino Control Commission (“Commission”) Gaming Agents to the definition of peace officer in R.C. 2935.01(B). It was a pleasure to discuss this matter with you and with Senator Coley. Your willingness to introduce the amendment demonstrates a commitment to, and recognition of, the Commission’s Gaming Agents as valued members of the law enforcement community.

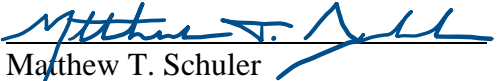
The Commission was created in 2011 and was charged with ensuring the integrity of casino gaming through licensing, regulatory compliance, and enforcement of the law. By statute, the Commission is a law enforcement agency and its Gaming Agents are law enforcement officers. R.C. 3772.03(F). Gaming agents are peace officers certified by the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy. R.C. 109.77(B)(1)(j) and R.C. 3772.01(K). The Enforcement Division is comprised of gaming agents, investigators, and criminal intelligence analysts. Gaming agents have arrest authority on all casino property as well as outside of the casino when enforcing the criminal provisions of the Casino Control Law. They are headquartered at Commission offices in the four casinos and staff a 24-7 operation.

Gaming Agents routinely respond to calls for assistance that have resulted in physical harm or an imminent threat of physical harm to them. Often, local law enforcement officers are also present for these matters. However, Ohio law presently only allows those local law enforcement officers to enjoy the protections afforded by the definition of peace officer in R.C. 2935.01(B). Namely, an assault on the responding local law enforcement officer could be charged as a felony and the same assault on the responding Gaming Agent would be charged as a misdemeanor. Sub. H.B. 236 would change that, correct what appears to be a technical oversight, and ensure that Gaming Agents are treated the same as their other law enforcement colleagues.

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Again, thank you and the members of the Judiciary Committee for approval of the amendment to include Gaming Agents in the definition of peace officer in R.C. 2935.01(B). I wholeheartedly encourage passage of Sub. H.B. 236.

Respectfully,


Matthew T. Schuler
Executive Director

CC: Vice Chair Manning
Ranking Member Thomas
Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee