



Benefiting North Dakota Communities through Charitable Gaming

Testimony in NEUTRAL of Senate Bill 2373 (amendments needed)

March 5, 2025

Chairman Klemin and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

For the record, I'm Scott Meske, representing the North Dakota Gaming Alliance and on behalf of the 178 Members of the NDGA, we offer thoughts on Senate Bill 2373.

We understand the intent of SB 2373 and generally appreciate the clarification language. Allowing licensed bingo halls that choose not to serve alcohol to continue gaming is the right thing to do. It's those pesky unintended consequences with this bill that gives us pause at this time, depending on one's interpretation. For instance, in smaller towns, there might only be a Legion Hall that is the central gathering venue for weddings, reunions, and other community activities where minors are present, just by virtue of the event. Does this language mean they would have to shut down their gaming during that event?

After we hammered out the definition of alcohol beverage establishment (for gaming) last session, I've personally seen establishments investing in constructing side rooms, or new walls to ensure compliance with the 'designated area' language in Code. Veteran and fraternal organizations are likely unable to invest in such new construction, and that puts their gaming license in jeopardy, if left to interpretation.

Again, to reiterate, the intent of the legislation is good, but we are concerned about the interpretation of that language. With simple a clarification amendment, we could absolutely support SB 2373.

Thank you and with that I would stand for any questions.