

HB 1615 Charitable Gaming Site Authorization, should be **stopped** on the Senate floor. **Do Not Pass**

This is a troublesome bill for communities like mine: Velva, pop. 1,086. Outside gaming entities want unfettered entry into local bars **and** want to eliminate local government approval.

Our charitable gaming (Velva Fire Department Gaming) takes a repeated lead with expenditures needed for Velva to have a credible fire department – which is imperative. This is an example of small towns being creative with charitable gaming proceeds and keeping it local. We need assurance that this will continue.

Not everyone understands or knows what exists in a community regarding charitable gaming proceeds and how detrimental it can be to rural communities. Many small cities use local gaming dollars for improvement and maintenance—curb appeal. These are things local small budgets can't always support because of limited dollars.

I believe cities and townships need to be another stopping point to retain a local voice for their constituents and gaming entities. Cities need to know what is coming into their jurisdiction, plain and simple.

Points to consider but not solely unique to Velva:

- Our fire department covers both rural and urban areas. Given the nature of climate swings, we are not immune to devastating fires. We need a vibrant, skilled fire department with top-of-the-line equipment and gear.
- The fire department's latest truck acquisition (all gaming funds) carried a hefty \$275,000 price tag. Velva is planning a new fire station, hopefully in the next five years. It will be constructed on land recently acquired with gaming dollars.

- Should a significant decrease in revenue occur, additional dollars will be needed to maintain a viable fire department, and funding will have to be syphoned elsewhere from the taxpayers, insurance premiums, and state coffers.
- Home and business insurance premiums factor into a fire department's proximity when insuring dwellings and property.
- Bar owners may not be fully informed or understand the value of certain gaming dollars and their crucial role in a community.
- An agreement is needed between the gaming and the bar first, as it has been, but the local government needs to continue as another step in the process.
- Charitable gambling has been a hardy alternative for cities to thrive without additional taxation to the citizens. Councils and commissions need to stay in the process for added strength to small towns.

This bill would be a punch to small cities that have utilized local charitable gaming to strengthen their community in detrimental ways.

DO NOT PASS. HB 1615

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mary Liz Davis

City Commissioner

Velva ND