

Testimony of Dave Weiler House Bill 1484, House Industry, Business and Labor Committee, Feb. 8th 2023

Chairman Louser and members of the committee, for the Record my name is Dave Weiler.

I am here today to speak in favor of HB 1484.

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First and most importantly this is a local control issue. If an establishment in Belfield North Dakota has the proper license, and the mayor or city commission approves of etab gaming they should be allowed to have them.

There will be others after me that will make the case.

This bill would also allow a little gaming in Liquor stores attached to convenience stores only if the local governing body approves it.

We know about some of the misleading information this session regarding C-stores and gaming.

Allow me go over some facts about Convenience/liquor stores. The E-tab machines are not in C stores, they are in liquor stores. (show pictures)

Separate door to liquor store.

ND lottery kiosk is in the C store, and in many c-stores throughout the state..... where a 10 yr. old can purchase a ticket. So it's ok for the state to have gaming in a location where under age kids are allowed, but it's not ok for charities to have a little gaming only where 21 year olds are allowed.

Etabs were allowed in 2017, there are over 600 C-stores in ND, 6 years later we now have 4 liquor stores attached to a C store that have E tabs. 4 locations in 6 years.

There is Concern over the growth of e tabs.

(2017 to 2021. 3,400 e tab machines in 4 yrs, that is 1,700 per biennium, In the 2 yrs since we now have 4,400 e tabs. That is a growth 1,000 machines in the last 2 yrs. The trend is going down not up. Bars and restaurants are closing due mainly to staffing issues, this will keep the number of e tabs down as well.

The ND gaming commission was told 6 months ago that if they didn't pass the rule to challenge this that we would have 400 convenience/liquor stores with e tabs. They have had 6 yrs. 4 locations in ND.

There will not be an explosion of etabs in these locations, not only for the above reason but for other reasons.

Cities of Fargo, Grand Forks, Minot, Dickinson do not allow liquor to be sold at C stores. That's about 40 % of the population.

City of Bismarck, does allow it. City of Bismarck and Mandan have 21 Convenience stores, 18 of the 21 have the proper license to allow e tabs, yet 1 store has e tabs.

No explosion happening here, and there won't be. We believe that statewide there are about 30 CStores/liquor stores that have the proper license.

I've met with the manager of the on the run store in NW Bismarck, (pictured) they tell me that they love the machines, they bring in more business to the Convenience store, but here is what else they tell me.

The people that play the machines the most? Are women. Why? Because some women do not want to be seen in a bar, they don't want to be harassed in a bar. They want to feel safe. They like to support the charity, do a little gaming but more importantly, they feel safe.

Finally I want to talk about some Veterans organizations that are here today. You might ask why do they care about this bill.

Prior to 1979 the only charitable gaming in ND was Veterans and Fraternal organizations.

These groups did wonderful things in their communities with the help of charitable gaming, and they were able to do more for their Veterans.

Today the charitable gaming industry in ND is much more competitive with baseball, hockey, wrestling, gymnastic groups and many many others, with 314 gaming organizations in ND, they have made it difficult through the years for Veteran and Fraternal organizations to compete in this industry.

Veterans are not the type of people who will go attempt to steal a site from a baseball, or childrens group. They just aren't that type of people.

We would like to see Veterans organizations, have a few more sites so they can do more for their Veterans. We feel like the C-Store/liquor store is a place where they can expand a little and not poach sites from other charities.

Bismarck American Legion is the charity at the On the Run C-store/Liquor Store, I think someone will be here to explain in more detail about the wonderful things they have done because of that site.

Veterans and Fraternal organizations give their charitable money away to local groups, you will hear more about it today.

While not to discredit other groups because they do some good things as well but they do use a good portion of their money on their own cause. Veterans support and help Veterans and give to communities.

Please help provide a safe place for those that enjoy gaming and supporting our Veterans.

Again, I ask you to please support HB 1484

Chairman Louser, Vice Chair Ostlie and members of the committee, Thank you for your service to ND and I would be happy to answer any questions.