

SB 2035

I've been on the Charitable Gaming Board for our local Grafton Curlers for over 20 years now and am very concerned about this bill pulling the rug out on a very important part of our local community. The Bill leaves much uncertainty. We certainly qualify to continue as a charity under the language in the bill as we are a nonprofit providing community recreation and youth activities by the public utilizing our curling facility and have additionally sponsored many worthy outside charitable causes over the years when funds allowed. The language omitting "in state adult amateur athletics as a "worthy" endeavor concerns me as we may or may not fall in that category with our adult recreational leagues. Our facility provides recreation for all members of the community, including adult male and female recreational leagues, youth leagues, and student access to the facility coordinated through the local schools. Because we are a small community and there is lack of facilities to host events, the facility is utilized by the public for various functions such as local organizations meetings, business presentations and family events such as celebrations. Our local Shriners use our kitchen rent free to generate funds for their own charitable causes. I can assure you in our organization there is no admin taking bloated salaries, no palace for office admin, just a decently maintained recreational facility that provides a gathering space for social gatherings and recreation during the winter for all ages in our small town. We are currently undertaking a nearly \$100,000 project to replace our ice plant which is over 30 years old. Killing our revenue stream from gaming mid project would close the Curling facility for good and leave the ND based refrigeration contractor we are contracted with hanging out to dry as trying to raise funds to complete this project in today's economy would be nearly impossible. The bill also takes aim at snowmobile clubs to maintain trails. This is also a mistake to squash as our local snowmobile club does a fantastic job of providing winter recreation to all ages. I can attest, my entire family and many of my friends have been utilizing these trails for decades. In my experience, our local charities, if the funds aren't fully utilized for trail maintenance or for the core operations of the charity in years of little snowfall they responsibly give back to the community by donating to many charitable things like local scholarships to students throughout the area. To keep people in small town ND we need more community recreation like this not less. I'm not sure of the aim of this bill. Non profit status and state reviews that are presently in place now should prevent abuse on its own. Local small town well managed charities filling local needs shouldn't get the boot while large publicly funded institutions running gaming like colleges can continue to expand at the expense of small town needs.

Sincerely,

Chris Bjerneby

Grafton Curlers Board Member and concerned Walsh County ND Citizen