

3/3/2025

To: ND House Education Committee

Re: In opposition to SB2035

Dear Education Committee Representatives,

My name is Agatha Frisby, and I am a constituent of District 20 writing to you regarding SB2035, which affects subsection 7 of the public-spirited section of ND Gaming law. As a board member of the Grafton Curling Club, I oppose this bill because it will negatively impact small community organizations that rely on gaming revenue.

Deleting some organizations that currently offer gaming will not impact limiting gaming. Even if some organizations do not get licensed due to this bill's clarification, other organizations will apply and will continue to pay gaming tax. In small, rural communities, organizations like curling clubs cannot survive on paid memberships alone and receive no tax revenue. Only a few small-town curling clubs remain in the state despite curling being the official state sport. The Grafton Curling Club is presently planning huge investments in machine infrastructure as our ice plant ages and replacement parts become obsolete. Gaming funds are the primary source of funding for such overhead investments, which are simply not feasible with membership fees alone. None of the gaming dollars benefit individual members of the Club.

The Grafton Curling Club would be significantly affected by this bill by no longer being able to maintain recreation facilities made available to the public (not only members) nor sponsor youth educational and recreational opportunities. Our Club recently hosted the Dakota Territory Curling Association's Club Playdowns and will host High School State Curling next year. At least two bonspiels are hosted at the Club annually, drawing in curlers from around the region. The Club also opens its doors each year for a week to the local schools' physical education classes. Additionally, I am presently in the process of restoring the Grafton Curling Club's youth program for next season, which will not be feasible without the adult men's and women's leagues at the Club. In addition to curling recreational activities, other local organizations rent the facility to hold meetings and functions within the Club facility throughout the year.

If our Club were to have to close its doors, at least three local jobs would be lost. The community would also lose a seasonal dining opportunity in a town with limited dining options. Twice weekly (and throughout special events), the Shriners operate out of the Club (open to the general public) and donate proceeds to a children's hospital.

Gaming revenue supports small community organizations like the Grafton Curling Club. Additionally, community non-profits and charitable organizations share excess gaming revenue through scholarships and local charitable donations. At a minimum, existing organizations that are structured around gaming revenue should be grandfathered investments, as the loss of this primary source of revenue would likely be fatal to small-town, rural organizations.

I urge you to vote No on SB2035. The loss of gaming funds will be detrimental to local organizations like the Grafton Curling Club and the larger community. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Agatha Frisby
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