

Chairperson Heinert, Vice Chairperson Schreiber-Beck, and all members of the N.D. House Education Committee,

My name is Jennifer Lindenberger and I am from Minto, ND. I am testifying regarding SB2035 and am in opposition to this bill.

I have been a member of the Grafton Curling Club for almost 30 years and am currently the treasurer of the club. Over those 30 years, I have watched our club be able to offer both youth and adults in Grafton and the surrounding communities the opportunity to join a sport that they can compete in for their lifetime. Not only is it an outlet for physical activity during the frigid winter months, it's also an opportunity to meet and make lifetime friends.

Although our club's nonprofit charitable status would qualify under the proposed language, it is genuinely concerning that recreation clubs such as ours could be in jeopardy. Our club has a long history of promoting youth curling not only by offering youth lessons, but we host several high school physical education programs in bringing students to the club to try curling and we have helped several youth and junior teams compete at state, regional, national and international levels. I know I would not have been able to attend junior nationals or international curling camps without the support the gaming provided the club. We also provide all the equipment needed for anyone to try our sport such as sliders, brooms and delivery devices. With our gaming funds, all the equipment, use of the facility and members to help teach are provided at NO COST.

Trying to limit the availability of recreational clubs to those in rural communities such as ours would only add to the issues we face in trying to build our community. Beyond recreation, our facility provides another place for hosting events, meetings, and parties. Hosting spaces are extremely limited in Grafton. Currently, we offer our kitchen facilities free of charge to our local Shriners to use. They cook on two league nights and all the proceeds they bring in go towards the purchase of medical equipment for children.

As you can see, the funds we raise from our gaming are put back into our club's building maintenance, the community, local youth, and local charities. Our board members are all club volunteers who only want to see the club and its traditions continue in the community.

In 2023, curling was adopted as the North Dakota state sport. I certainly hope our legislators are trying to promote our state sport and not hinder it. Although not all clubs in the state have charitable gaming, it is the only thing keeping the small-town clubs open as a large majority have had to close in the past few years due to lack of funds to keep the facility operational. The cost of operating a curling club is a large expense. The cooling equipment, utilities, and repairs add up quickly each year. And for example, our current ice-making equipment as reached the end of its useful life after 30-40 years. We are looking at a minimum of \$100,000+ to try and replace parts of the plant to keep it operational. Without our gaming funds, this would not be a possibility. And to try an raise the funds given the current economy would be impossible and the club would likely have to close its doors. If we were to close, it would have an impact on the local economy. Just this past January we hosted the Dakota Territory Regional Club Playdowns. We hosted 19 teams from across North Dakota and South Dakota for 4 days. That's over 80 competitors plus spectators that travelled with them to Grafton. They stayed in hotel rooms not only in Grafton, but Park River and Grand Forks. They patronized our local eating establishments, shopped at our local stores, and

purchased gas and other items from our local gas stations. Our local Shriners offered food at the club and all those proceeds went to medical equipment for needy youth. Being a member in the Dakota Territory Curling Association puts us in a rotation to host a regional/state playdown event each year as long as we maintain our facility.

I would like to see any community recreation clubs/organizations that maintain their facilities as open to the public and share their excess gaming revenues with other charitable organizations in their local community be included in the list of eligible public-spirited entities.

I've also included some pictures of youth and others that have come to our club to learn about curling.

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Lindenberger  
Grafton Curling Club









