

# North Dakota

## Travel Alliance Partnership

**Testimony of Scooter Pursley  
Executive Director, ND Travel Alliance Partnership  
In Opposition to SB 2035  
January 13, 2025**

Chair Larsen and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

My name is Scooter Pursley and I am the executive director of the North Dakota Travel Alliance Partnership (TAP). TAP is a coalition of travel industry stakeholders, including convention and visitors bureaus, state attractions, businesses and others who help make tourism the third-largest industry in North Dakota's. On behalf of the tourism industry and its partners, I am asking you to oppose SB 2035 for the simple reason that it excludes "tourism" from acceptable uses of gaming revenue.

This piece of legislation emerged from the interim Judiciary Committee's comprehensive study of the problems that have arisen from the proliferation of electronic pull tabs and other gaming in recent years. While striking out "tourism," it still leaves the option open for CVBs to continue to receive funding if the political subdivision deems them to "confer a direct benefit on the community at large," which is the sole purpose that CVBs exist.

Removing "tourism" does not address the issues that the interim committee was tasked to address. It simply was low-hanging fruit that could be easily picked off.

CVBs never have been part of the problems facing the gaming industry, but they could be part of a larger problem if the funding mechanism is removed. Their gaming funds are not used to benefit one group, but their communities at large. Without it, the three municipalities in North Dakota currently conducting charitable gaming would see less funding for marketing, fewer conferences, conventions, events and thus less tax revenue.

In 2023 alone, the Bismarck-Mandan Convention and Visitors Bureau used gaming funds to help attract 290 multiple-day meetings and events that attracted 269,000 attendees who spent \$23.5 million in the community. Charitable gaming accounts for about \$900,000, or half of the Bismarck-Mandan CVB budget.

TAP asks that you consider amending SB 2035 to allow "tourism," and CVBs to continue conducting charitable gaming as they have done since 1993 for the greater benefit of their communities. Thank you for your consideration.

**Scooter Pursley** | Executive Director  
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