

North Dakota Senate
State Capitol
600 E Boulevard Ave
Bismarck, ND 58505

Subject: Opposition to House Bill 1615 – Protection
of Local Charitable Gaming Organizations

Dear North Dakota Senators,
I am writing to express my strong opposition to House Bill 1615, specifically regarding the amendment that removes local government approval from site gaming authorizations. This change would have significant negative consequences for small, local charities that rely on gaming revenues to support their community initiatives.

Over the past few years, we have seen a troubling pattern in which smaller, local charities have had to fight to retain their gaming sites due to external pressures. The proposed amendment would further exacerbate this issue by allowing non-local organizations to gain authorization to operate gaming sites without local oversight. This would inevitably lead to larger, outside organizations encroaching on existing gaming locations, pushing out smaller, community-based charities that are already struggling to maintain their operations. While I understand the opposition of private businesses being governed by local lawmakers decisions can be frustrating; it also plays a crucial role of checks and balances for the city. Many times, without the support of small local charities rural emergency services will be required to seek funding from other sources or may possibly be alleviated totally due to lack of funding.

Local governments play a crucial role in ensuring that charitable gaming remains a community-driven effort that benefits North Dakota residents directly. By removing their oversight, HB 1615 opens the door to an influx of organizations that may not have the best interests of our local communities at heart. Local government has zero authority on how a gaming entity can distribute

funds. The result would be a shift in gaming revenue away from the local charities and local communities that small towns have long relied upon to support essential community services, youth programs, and other charitable initiatives.

I urge you to reject this amendment and uphold the integrity charitable gaming in North Dakota.

Protecting the ability of local organizations to maintain their sites and continue serving the communities should be a priority. I appreciate your time and consideration and respectfully ask that you stand in support of small, local charities by opposing this harmful provision within HB 1615.

Sincerely,

Kristen Bechtold

Velva Volunteer Fire Department Gaming