

4662

2011-2012 Regular Sessions

I N   S E N A T E

April 14, 2011

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Introduced by Sen. BONACIC -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Racing, Gaming and Wagering

AN ACT to amend the general municipal law, in relation to poker tournaments

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1     Section 1.     Section 185 of the general municipal law, as amended by  
2 chapter 574 of the laws of 1978, is amended to read as follows:  
3     S 185. Short title; purpose of article. This article shall be known  
4 and may be cited as the games of chance licensing law. The legislature  
5 hereby declares that the raising of funds for the promotion of bona fide  
6 charitable, educational, scientific, health, religious and patriotic  
7 causes and undertakings, where the beneficiaries are undetermined, is in  
8 the public interest. It hereby finds that, as conducted prior to the  
9 enactment of this article, games of chance were the subject of exploita-  
10 tion by professional gamblers, promoters, and commercial interests, AND  
11 IT FINDS FURTHER THAT, ALTHOUGH ELEMENTS OF SKILL MAY BE INVOLVED, THE  
12 VARIOUS GAMES OF POKER, INCLUDING THE GAME KNOWN AS "TEXAS HOLD 'EM,"  
13 ARE GAMES OF CHANCE THAT SHOULD BE REGULATED UNDER THIS ARTICLE. It is  
14 hereby declared to be the policy of the legislature that all phases of  
15 the supervision, licensing and regulation of games of chance and of the  
16 conduct of games of chance, should be closely controlled and that the  
17 laws and regulations pertaining thereto should be strictly construed and  
18 rigidly enforced; that the conduct of the game and all attendant activ-  
19 ities should be so regulated and adequate controls so instituted as to  
20 discourage commercialization of gambling in all its forms, including the  
21 rental of commercial premises for games of chance, and to ensure a maxi-  
22 mum availability of the net proceeds of games of chance exclusively for  
23 application to the worthy causes and undertakings specified herein; that  
24 the only justification for this article is to foster and support such

EXPLANATION--Matter in *ITALICS* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [ ] is old law to be omitted.

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1 worthy causes and undertakings, and that the mandate of section nine of  
2 article one of the state constitution, as amended, should be carried out  
3 by rigid regulations to prevent commercialized gambling, prevent partic-  
4 ipation by criminal and other undesirable elements and prevent the  
5 diversion of funds from the purposes herein authorized.

6 S 2. Subdivision 3 of section 186 of the general municipal law, as  
7 amended by section 5 of part B of chapter 383 of the laws of 2001, is  
8 amended to read as follows:

9 3. "Games of chance" shall mean and include only the games known as  
10 "merchandise wheels", "coin boards", "merchandise boards", "seal cards",  
11 "raffles", "POKER TOURNAMENTS" and "bell jars" and such other specific  
12 games as may be authorized by the board, in which prizes are awarded on  
13 the basis of a designated winning number or numbers, color or colors,  
14 symbol or symbols determined by chance, but not including games commonly  
15 known as "bingo or lotto" which are controlled under article fourteen-H  
16 of this chapter and also not including "bookmaking", "policy or numbers  
17 games" and "lottery" as defined in section 225.00 of the penal law. No  
18 game of chance shall involve wagering of money by one player against  
19 another player.

20 S 3. Section 186 of the general municipal law is amended by adding a  
21 new subdivision 3-e to read as follows:

22 3-E. "POKER TOURNAMENT" SHALL MEAN AND INCLUDE THOSE GAMES OF CHANCE  
23 IN WHICH PARTICIPANTS COMPETE BY PLAYING POKER GAMES THAT ARE APPROVED  
24 BY THE BOARD. PLACEMENT IN A POKER TOURNAMENT SHALL BE DETERMINED BY THE  
25 NUMBER OF POKER CHIPS THAT ARE ACCUMULATED DURING THE COURSE OF PLAY OR  
26 BY THE VARIOUS TIMES THAT CONTESTANTS ARE ELIMINATED FROM THE TOURNAMENT  
27 DURING THE COURSE OF PLAY. POKER CHIPS SHALL BE ALLOTTED TO CONTESTANTS  
28 IN ACCORDANCE WITH RULES THAT ARE ADOPTED BY THE BOARD.

29 S 4. Subdivision 14 of section 186 of the general municipal law, as  
30 amended by chapter 637 of the laws of 1999, is amended to read as  
31 follows:

32 14. "One occasion" shall mean the successive operations of any one  
33 single type of game of chance which results in the awarding of a series  
34 of prizes amounting to five hundred dollars or four hundred dollars  
35 during any one license period, in accordance with the provisions of  
36 subdivision eight of section one hundred eighty-nine of this article, as  
37 the case may be. For purposes of the game of chance known as a merchan-  
38 dise wheel or a raffle, "one occasion" shall mean the successive oper-  
39 ations of any one such merchandise wheel or raffle for which the limit  
40 on a series of prizes provided by subdivision six of section one hundred  
41 eighty-nine of this article shall apply. For purposes of the game of  
42 chance known as a bell jar, "one occasion" shall mean the successive  
43 operation of any one such bell jar, seal card, coin board, or merchan-  
44 dise board which results in the awarding of a series of prizes amounting  
45 to three thousand dollars. For the purposes of the game of chance known  
46 as raffle "one occasion" shall mean a calendar year during which succes-  
47 sive operations of such game are conducted. FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE GAME  
48 KNOWN AS A POKER TOURNAMENT, "ONE OCCASION" SHALL MEAN THE PERIOD OF  
49 TIME FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF SUCH TOURNAMENT UNTIL A WINNER OR WINNERS  
50 ARE DETERMINED OR A PRE-DETERMINED TIME TO CONCLUDE THE TOURNAMENT HAS  
51 BEEN REACHED.

52 S 5. Subdivision 5 of section 189 of the general municipal law, as  
53 amended by chapter 337 of the laws of 1998, is amended to read as  
54 follows:

55 5. No single prize awarded by games of chance other than raffle OR  
56 POKER TOURNAMENT shall exceed the sum or value of three hundred dollars,

1 except that for merchandise wheels, no single prize shall exceed the sum  
2 or value of two hundred fifty dollars. No single prize awarded by raffle  
3 shall exceed the sum or value of fifty thousand dollars, except that an  
4 authorized organization may award by raffle a single prize having a  
5 value of up to and including one hundred thousand dollars if its appli-  
6 cation for a license filed pursuant to section one hundred ninety of  
7 this article includes a statement of its intent to award a prize having  
8 such value. No single wager shall exceed six dollars and for bell jars,  
9 coin boards, or merchandise boards, no single prize shall exceed five  
10 hundred dollars provided, however, that such limitation shall not apply  
11 to the amount of money or value paid by the participant in a raffle in  
12 return for a ticket or other receipt. For coin boards and merchandise  
13 boards, the value of a prize shall be determined by its costs to the  
14 authorized organization or, if donated, its fair market value.

15 S 6. Subdivision 8 of section 189 of the general municipal law, as  
16 amended by chapter 302 of the laws of 2010, is amended to read as  
17 follows:

18 8. Except for merchandise wheels [and], raffles AND POKER TOURNAMENTS,  
19 no series of prizes on any one occasion shall aggregate more than four  
20 hundred dollars when the licensed authorized organization conducts five  
21 single types of games of chance during any one license period. Except  
22 for merchandise wheels, raffles [and], bell jars AND POKER TOURNAMENTS,  
23 no series of prizes on any one occasion shall aggregate more than five  
24 hundred dollars when the licensed authorized organization conducts less  
25 than five single types of games of chance, exclusive of merchandise  
26 wheels, raffles [and], bell jars AND POKER TOURNAMENTS, during any one  
27 license period. No authorized organization shall award by raffle prizes  
28 with an aggregate value in excess of five hundred thousand dollars  
29 during any one license period.

30 S 7. Section 195-d of the general municipal law, as amended by chapter  
31 637 of the laws of 1999, is amended to read as follows:

32 S 195-d. Charge for admission and participation; amount of prizes;  
33 award of prizes. A fee may be charged by any licensee for admission to  
34 any game or games of chance conducted under any license issued under  
35 this article. The clerk or department may in its discretion fix a mini-  
36 mum fee. NO MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS SHALL BE CHARGED AS AN ADMIS-  
37 SION FEE TO A POKER TOURNAMENT. FIFTY PERCENT OF SUCH FEE SHALL BE  
38 APPLIED TO A PRIZE OR PRIZES, AS MAY BE DETERMINED BY THE AUTHORIZED  
39 ORGANIZATION, AND FIFTY PERCENT OF SUCH FEE SHALL BE RETAINED BY THE  
40 AUTHORIZED ORGANIZATION, SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF SUBDIVISION SIX OF  
41 SECTION ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY-SIX OF THIS ARTICLE. With the exception of  
42 bell jars, coin boards, seal cards, merchandise boards, and raffles,  
43 every winner shall be determined and every prize shall be awarded and  
44 delivered within the same calendar day as that upon which the game was  
45 played. No alcoholic beverage shall be offered or given as a prize in  
46 any game of chance.

47 S 8. Section 195-e of the general municipal law, as amended by chapter  
48 94 of the laws of 1981, is amended to read as follows:

49 S 195-e. Advertising games. A licensee may advertise the conduct of  
50 games of chance to the general public by means of newspaper, circular,  
51 handbill and poster, and by one sign not exceeding sixty square feet in  
52 area, which may be displayed on or adjacent to the premises owned or  
53 occupied by a licensed authorized organization, and when an organization  
54 is licensed to conduct games of chance on premises of an authorized  
55 games of chance lessor, one additional such sign may be displayed on or  
56 adjacent to the premises in which the games are to be conducted. Addi-

1 tional signs may be displayed upon any fire fighting equipment belonging  
2 to any licensed authorized organization which is a volunteer fire compa-  
3 ny, or upon any equipment of a first aid or rescue squad in and through-  
4 out the community served by such volunteer fire company or such first  
5 aid or rescue squad, as the case may be. All advertisements shall be  
6 limited to the description of such event as "Games of chance" [or], "Las  
7 Vegas Night" OR "POKER TOURNAMENT", the name of the authorized organiza-  
8 tion conducting such games, the license number of the authorized organ-  
9 ization as assigned by the clerk or department and the date, location  
10 and time of the event.

11 S 9. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day after  
12 it shall have become a law; provided, however, that effective immediate-  
13 ly, the addition, amendment and/or repeal of any rule or regulation  
14 necessary for the implementation of this act on its effective date is  
15 authorized to be made and completed by the state racing and wagering  
16 board on or before such date.