

STATE OF NEW YORK

988

2017-2018 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 6, 2017

Introduced by Sens. BONACIC, FUNKE, O'MARA -- 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 § 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 tournaments of the various games of poker as
12 offered by authorized organizations pursuant to subdivision two of
13 section nine of article I of the New York state constitution, should be
14 regulated under this article. It is hereby declared to be the policy of
15 the legislature that all phases of the supervision, licensing and regu-
16 lation of games of chance and of the conduct of games of chance, should
17 be closely controlled and that the laws and regulations pertaining ther-
18 eto should be strictly construed and rigidly enforced; that the conduct
19 of the game and all attendant activities should be so regulated and
20 adequate controls so instituted as to discourage commercialization of
21 gambling in all its forms, including the rental of commercial premises
22 for games of chance, and to ensure a maximum availability of the net
23 proceeds of games of chance exclusively for application to the worthy
24 causes and undertakings specified herein; that the only justification

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

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1 for this article is to foster and support such worthy causes and under-
2 takings, and that the mandate of section nine of article one of the
3 state constitution, as amended, should be carried out by rigid regu-
4 lations to prevent commercialized gambling, prevent participation by
5 criminal and other undesirable elements and prevent the diversion of
6 funds from the purposes herein authorized.

7 § 2. Subdivision 3 of section 186 of the general municipal law, as
8 amended by chapter 531 of the laws of 2011, is amended to read as
9 follows:

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

21 § 3. Section 186 of the general municipal law is amended by adding a
22 new subdivision 3-f to read as follows:

23 3-f. "Poker tournaments" shall mean and include contests in which
24 participants compete by playing poker games that are approved by the
25 board. Placement in a poker tournament shall be determined by the number
26 of poker chips that are accumulated during the course of play or by the
27 various times that contestants are eliminated from the tournament during
28 the course of play. Poker chips shall be allotted to contestants in
29 accordance with rules that are adopted by the board.

30 § 4. Subdivision 14 of section 186 of the general municipal law, as
31 amended by chapter 531 of the laws of 2011, is amended to read as
32 follows:

33 14. "One occasion" shall mean the successive operations of any one
34 single type of game of chance which results in the awarding of a series
35 of prizes amounting to five hundred dollars or four hundred dollars
36 during any one license period, in accordance with the provisions of
37 subdivision eight of section one hundred eighty-nine of this article, as
38 the case may be. For purposes of the game of chance known as a merchan-
39 dise wheel or a raffle, "one occasion" shall mean the successive oper-
40 ations of any one such merchandise wheel or raffle for which the limit
41 on a series of prizes provided by subdivision six of section one hundred
42 eighty-nine of this article shall apply. For purposes of the game of
43 chance known as a bell jar, "one occasion" shall mean the successive
44 operation of any one such bell jar, seal card, event game, coin board,
45 or merchandise board which results in the awarding of a series of prizes
46 amounting to three thousand dollars. For the purposes of the game of
47 chance known as raffle "one occasion" shall mean a calendar year during
48 which successive operations of such game are conducted. For the purpose
49 of poker tournaments, "one occasion" shall mean the period of time from
50 the commencement of such tournament until a winner or winners are deter-
51 mined or a pre-determined time to conclude the tournament has been
52 reached.

53 § 5. Subdivision 5 of section 189 of the general municipal law, as
54 amended by chapter 434 of the laws of 2016, is amended to read as
55 follows:

1 5. No single prize awarded by games of chance other than raffle or
2 poker tournament shall exceed the sum or value of three hundred dollars,
3 except that for merchandise wheels, no single prize shall exceed the sum
4 or value of two hundred fifty dollars. No single prize awarded by raffle
5 shall exceed the sum or value of three hundred thousand dollars. No
6 single wager shall exceed six dollars and for bell jars, coin boards, or
7 merchandise boards, no single prize shall exceed five hundred dollars
8 provided, however, that such limitation shall not apply to the amount of
9 money or value paid by the participant in a raffle in return for a tick-
10 et or other receipt. For coin boards and merchandise boards, the value
11 of a prize shall be determined by its costs to the authorized organiza-
12 tion or, if donated, its fair market value.

13 § 6. Subdivision 8 of section 189 of the general municipal law, as
14 amended by chapter 434 of the laws of 2016, is amended to read as
15 follows:

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

28 § 7. Section 195-d of the general municipal law, as amended by chapter
29 637 of the laws of 1999, is amended to read as follows:

30 § 195-d. Charge for admission and participation; amount of prizes;
31 award of prizes. A fee may be charged by any licensee for admission to
32 any game or games of chance conducted under any license issued under
33 this article. The clerk or department may in its discretion fix a mini-
34 mum fee. No more than one hundred dollars shall be charged as an admis-
35 sion fee to a poker tournament. Fifty percent of such fee shall be
36 applied to a prize or prizes, as may be determined by the authorized
37 organization, and fifty percent of such fee shall be retained by the
38 authorized organization, subject to the provisions of subdivision six of
39 section one hundred eighty-six of this article. With the exception of
40 bell jars, coin boards, seal cards, merchandise boards, and raffles,
41 every winner shall be determined and every prize shall be awarded and
42 delivered within the same calendar day as that upon which the game was
43 played. No alcoholic beverage shall be offered or given as a prize in
44 any game of chance.

45 § 8. Section 195-e of the general municipal law, as amended by chapter
46 94 of the laws of 1981, is amended to read as follows:

47 § 195-e. Advertising games. A licensee may advertise the conduct of
48 games of chance to the general public by means of newspaper, circular,
49 handbill and poster, and by one sign not exceeding sixty square feet in
50 area, which may be displayed on or adjacent to the premises owned or
51 occupied by a licensed authorized organization, and when an organization
52 is licensed to conduct games of chance on premises of an authorized
53 games of chance lessor, one additional such sign may be displayed on or
54 adjacent to the premises in which the games are to be conducted. Addi-
55 tional signs may be displayed upon any fire fighting equipment belonging
56 to any licensed authorized organization which is a volunteer fire compa-

ny, or upon any equipment of a first aid or rescue squad in and through-
out the community served by such volunteer fire company or such first
aid or rescue squad, as the case may be. All advertisements shall be
limited to the description of such event as "Games of chance" ~~[or]~~ "Las
Vegas Night" or "Poker Tournament", the name of the authorized organiza-
tion conducting such games, the license number of the authorized organ-
ization as assigned by the clerk or department and the date, location
and time of the event.

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