

## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT – AUGUST 22, 2020

Good Morning,

To his Excellency, the Supreme Governor, Brue Berger, Members of the PMA Board and brothers all.

You might think that with all the issues going on around the country today that the PA Legislature would only be working on items related to public health and welfare for these past months but that is far from the truth. Both the House and the Senate are meeting and tackling issues that cover the spectrum, I would like to cover just three areas that have possible effects on the lodges and other non-profit groups in Pennsylvania.

These are Skill Machines, Small Games of Chance and the Liquor code, though in many ways all three topics are intertwined within proposed legislation and discussion.

As we know there has been an on-going argument over whether Skill Machines are legal to operate and depending on which LCE agent is covering your area of the state you will get different answers to questions. Now I only see articles in the Harrisburg Patriot News but I have to believe that the same or similar items are showing in regional newspapers all over the state. Starting in February of this year full page ads from a group called "Pennsylvanians Against Illegal Gambling" Claims that "Shady Gambling Dens are popping up everywhere." It has to stop Now; it shows a picture with the caption...the photograph, was taken at a restaurant in PA. It goes on to state that these dens are luring gamblers of all ages including kids to use illegal machines. I checked into this group PA against illegal gambling and found that organization was formed on January 13, 2020 by Lyons Public Affairs and Communications, which is a public relations firm in Harrisburg (near the Capital building) that has been hired by the Casino Industry in PA. I put a call into them to get more information but my message was never returned. There have been many articles written for both pro and con on this issue with most of the cons containing the same rubber stamped information provided by casinos and the PA Lottery Commission which of course uses estimated numbers to plead their case.

There are bills going through the State House and Senate pertaining to Skill Machines including SB 1256 And HB 1285 when there is final word on these bills I will pass it along to the district Chairman and the PMA board. I would ask that each district chairman provide me with their e-mail address so that I can pass this information along in a timely manner, my e-mail is [Wgumbinger@comcast.net](mailto:Wgumbinger@comcast.net)

On to Small Games of Chance, Let me state right up front that no new legislation has been passed that has changed any of the small games of chance rules, keep following the guidelines that we have followed for some time. Now with that said there are several bills that are either in committee or are waiting to be put up for a vote in either the House or Senate. If any are passed then they must go before the Governor for Signature before become law. I have personally spoken with several members of the house and senate on small games and made recommendations to allow the lodges to have for a temporary shift in the percentage of funds that can be used by non-profit groups to help stay alive through this troubling time and to be able to continue the community service work that we do.

At this time House Bill 777 which passed the house on a vote of 202 for and zero against has been sent the Senate for further review and passage. That Bill asks for the groups to be able to use 100% of proceeds for self use for a period of one year after a disaster emergency has been proclaimed by the Governor. Again, NOT LAW YET!

There is Senate bill 1143 which has similar language but only suspends the 60/40 split for a period of 90 days, again, not a law yet; there is a pending public hearing on this bill but that date has not been set.

There is four other bills that are still in committee so I will not go into any detail on them until they have either been voted on or come up for public hearing.

The last are to cover is Liquor Control Enforcement, as the Territorial Managers can tell you when it goes to LCB rules most of them are written in such a way that it is up to the individual LCE agents to interpret the law as they see it and thus lodges and other organizations get different explanations of what is allowed and what is not. With this in Mind I met with a member of the House Liquor Control Committee back in January and had a very good conversation about the way the laws are written and how enforcement is not handled on an equal basis within the LCB districts let alone the whole state. I gave several examples of items that lodges have faces in recent history to prove my points during the discussion. The House committee member thanked me and said he would look into the matter further and bring it up to the committee.

I would like to thank Association President, Dave Donahue for allowing me to serve as Chairman this past year and for Brother Ray M for asking me to stay on board for another year. And Thank you for those watching near and far without booing or throwing any rotten tomatoes.

Yours Fraternally,

William Gumbinger