

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

House Bill 961
Ways and Means

(Harford County Delegation)

Budget and Taxation

Harford County - Gaming - Home Games - Bingo

This bill allows a home game in Harford County to include bingo if the game is conducted in a common area of a residential property that is restricted to residents who are at least 55 years old.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. No longer assessing monetary and/or incarceration penalties for bingo home game violations in Harford County does not materially affect State finances.

Local Effect: None. It is assumed that incarceration penalties for bingo home game violations in Harford County are rarely assessed, so local finances are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: An individual who is at least 21 years old may conduct a home game involving wagering if the home game (1) is limited to mah jong or a card game; (2) is conducted not more than once a week in the individual's home or in a common area of a residential property that is restricted to residents age 55 or older; (3) allows a player to compete directly against one or more other players who share a preexisting social relationship; (4) does not allow an individual to benefit financially in any way, directly or indirectly, other than from the winnings accrued by participating as a player in the game; and (5) has a \$1,000 limit on the total amount of money, tokens representing money, or any other thing or consideration of value that may be wagered by all players during any 24-hour period. The home game may not involve a player's use of an electronic device that connects to the Internet, the use of paid public advertising or promotions, the charging of specified fees, or the use of any money except money used for wagering.

A home game in Carroll County may include bingo if the game is conducted in a common area of a residential property that is restricted to residents who are at least 55 years old.

A person who violates specified betting, wagering, and gambling laws is guilty of a civil offense and is subject to a fine ranging from \$500 to \$1,000.

In Harford County, four classes of organizations can obtain a license to conduct certain types of gaming events: (1) particular religious groups; (2) State and nationally chartered veterans' organizations; (3) volunteer fire companies; and (4) specified nonprofit charitable organizations. Subject to specified limitations, a political committee may conduct a fundraiser entailing a gaming event or 50/50 game.

The Harford County Sheriff must charge the following license fees: \$5 for a bingo license; \$15 for a members-only instant bingo license; and \$10 for other specified licenses. The licensee must submit a specified report within 15 days after the licensed gaming activity. Prize money for a bingo game may not exceed \$500 or \$1,000 for a jackpot. Prize money for a members-only instant bingo game may not exceed \$500. Prize money for a raffle may not exceed \$10,000 if the sponsoring organization has not held a raffle for prize money exceeding \$1,000 in the current calendar year; otherwise the limit is \$1,000. Prize money for a paddle wheel game may not exceed \$10, and prize money for a game of 50/50 may not exceed \$500. A person who violates Harford County's local gaming laws is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction subject to imprisonment of up to 30 days and/or a fine of up to \$1,000.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Harford County; Comptroller's Office; Maryland State Lottery and Gaming Control Agency; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 16, 2020
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