



March 10, 2022

The Honorable Guy Guzzone and Members
Budget and Taxation Committee
Miller Senate Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Support – SB858 – Gaming – Electronic Instant Bingo Machines – Maximum Number of Machines

Dear Chairman Guzzone and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Delta Bingo and Delta Wayson's Bingo, two licensed commercial bingo operators in Anne Arundel County, I ask that you support SB858 – Gaming – Electronic Instant Bingo Machines – Maximum Number of Machines. This bill would serve to level the playing field amongst the existing six licensed commercial bingo operators in the State, which was inadvertently made unlevel by a last-minute amendment to the sports wagering legislation that passed last session.

Chapter 603 of 2012 extended in perpetuity the ability of certain bingo establishments to operate electronic instant bingo machines in Maryland. The grandfathering provision within that law specifies that certain entities may continue to operate no more than the number of electronic machines in operation on February 28, 2008. Only six commercial bingo operators in the State meet the grandfathering requirements and are licensed and regulated by the Lottery to operate – three of them are in Anne Arundel County and three of them in Calvert County.

As you all are well aware, the General Assembly enacted legislation last session to regulate sports wagering. As a result of an 11th-hour amendment, that legislation automatically granted a Class B sports wagering license to any operator of 200 or more electronic instant bingo machines. Because only 2 of the 6 operators meet this requirement, this legislative action upsets the competitive balance amongst the commercial operators. Moreover, it further disadvantages those operators who for various reasons happened to be operating fewer than 200 machines on the arbitrarily-chosen February 28, 2008 date referenced above.

From a pure fairness and equity standpoint, this bill would alter the existing grandfathering provision in the law to permit all existing licensees with less than 200 machines currently to operate up to 199 machines. To be clear, it would not grant the other 4 commercial bingo halls a sports wagering license, nor would it expand gaming beyond the entities that already hold commercial bingo operator licenses. Rather, it would allow us the ability to make things a bit more equitable amongst the licensed halls by permitting those that did not automatically received a sports wagering license the ability to install a limited number of additional machines.

On behalf of Delta Bingo and Delta Wayson's Bingo, I respectfully ask for a favorable report.

Sincerely,

John Cameron
President