

My name is Chris Vetter. I am a marketing executive and political consultant. I lived in Oregon all my life. I worked on more than 20 campaigns since 1990 and devoted much of my life to promoting equality of opportunity. I want to thank Michael Dembrow for his commitment to working people. We met when I was a student newspaper editor and he was fighting to protect adjunct faculty at Portland Community College. He is a great Oregonian and it is an honor to see him again.

On Friday, April 26, I received a distressing phone call from one of my closest friends. His name is John Ogai. He is the owner of the Encore Poker Club in Portland. His voice cracked as he spoke. With total despair he voiced a sentence I will never forget as long as I live. "Chris, everything I have worked for in my life may be over." John hails from a third generation Korean family born in Russia. He emigrated to the United States to continue his post-graduate education at Portland State. He is the classic American success story; an immigrant who came from a far away land with a few dollars and a dream. For a while he sold notebook computers. In 2004 he worked in real estate. In 2007 he launched an Internet startup specializing in software translation, helping people from different parts of the world connect. In 2010, he opened Encore, turning a lifeless basement into a bright hub of music, laughter and activity. Poker is a game of skill that unites people from every imaginable background and no one has been more skillful in bringing people together than my friend.

Before I received his phone call, *The Oregonian* published a page one story detailing the threat to poker clubs across the state. After reading the article, I realized there was a lot of misinformation about the clubs. They were being confused with video poker. People somehow believed the clubs were unlicensed or unregulated or had no employees. I knew immediately the clubs could be saved if lawmakers were educated about how they are managed and had an opportunity to hear from the poker community. Almost overnight, we formed a political action committee called Save Oregon Poker. The national Poker Players Alliance lists more than 17,000 registered players in Oregon and that just scratches the surface. We received more than 1000 Facebook likes and online petition signatures in a little more than a week. The people in this community are passionate about protecting these clubs because poker is an important part of their lives. Playing poker is an American tradition that has only improved with time.

These clubs are well managed and regulated by individual cities across the state in accordance with social gaming laws. When companies open for business they are expected to pay taxes, play by the rules and honor their responsibilities to every level of government. As part of that social contract, they expect that the rules they play by will not change overnight or change so radically as to prevent them from succeeding. My friend John invested everything he ever earned in his club and he has fulfilled his part of the bargain to operate honestly, above board and in compliance with all regulations. This state should not shut his club down. We need time to revisit the social gaming laws and find solutions to any challenges we encounter. Working together, we can improve social gaming and champion one of the most economically and ethnically diverse communities in Oregon.

Thank you for your time today.