

HB 2548 Testimony of John Ogai  
Owner, Encore Poker Club

Dear members of the committee

My name is John Ogai and I am the owner of Encore Poker Club located on the edge of the Pearl District in Portland, OR. Encore opened doors in October of 2010.

Our business model is simple. We are a bar/restaurant that attracts customers through offering daily poker tournaments. Encore employs 6 bartenders, 3 cooks, administrative assistant and 5 shift managers who run our poker tournaments.

I act as an owner and general manager at the same time. We are open 7 days a week and run 6 daily poker tournaments. We are one of the many small businesses in City of Portland that are embedded in City's economic fabric and social eco-system and deliver value by providing employment, having trade relationships with many vendors and suppliers, and paying our fair share of taxes, all along providing enjoyable and safe entertainment for many Oregonians to spend their leisure time.

When I started Encore Club and received a Social Gaming license to operate from the City of Portland, I believed that I was building and operating a business within established legal framework with clear rules and regulations. Within one year of being in business, it became clear that we have a viable business model that brings value to the city, the people and the community. But the legal framework that regulates us was established back in the 70s and needs updating to reflect modern realities and allow us to run our business without a fear of being punished by outdated rules that lost their relevancy.

So, I represent one of the many Oregon poker clubs that are really looking forward to the improvements and positive changes that this bill is going to bring to our communities and to our businesses. We as entrepreneurs, poured our hearts and souls into our businesses, tirelessly built them for years and all we ask for is to fix outdated legal framework that threatens good, robust working businesses that bring enjoyment to our customers and value to the city.

Thank you.