

To whom it may concern in the Oregon Legislature:

I am writing you this letter in opposition to the proposed changes via HB2190 to the Oregon Social Gaming law currently in place (ORS 167.117). The current proposal damages a thriving community that exists in our state and serves no purpose other than to close businesses that have become successful over the past decade, and drive much needed money from Oregon in to Washington.

I understand that ORS 167.117 was never intended to allow for the creation of social gaming clubs, and while they have existed on the fringes of legality this whole time, forcing them out of business and the players back underground only hurts our community. I think it's important for you to understand who the people are that patron these clubs are. Most are amateur players who came to enjoy the game through the poker boom of the late 2000's. We all work other jobs but use the game as recreation and relaxation. We develop relationships, both personal and professional, that better our lives through the game. Social clubs are less about the money and more about the game and the people. They also provide a safe and secure way for new players to learn the skills needed for success without risking large amounts of money and the risk of theft or cheating that many before them experienced.

For too long Oregon has frowned upon any source of "gambling" that directly competes with the lottery. However as the facts will show, lottery revenues have not been effected by the playing of poker in our state. The two formats cater to separate demographics. Additionally, the only people who would and want to benefit from this measure are the casinos in both Oregon or Washington who feel threatened by these small clubs. In my opinion, it is reckless and irresponsible of the legislation to make these changes at the behest of such organizations.

Poker players are reasonable people and we understand that something might need to be changed, but taking away our ability to play a game because of an outdated view of poker isn't the solution. I would encourage the legislature to actually step foot in one of these clubs and even perhaps play a few hands of poker to actually see what it is we do. If at nothing else at least take the time to solicit the opinions of the people who actually would lose something before deciding.

Thank you,
Roy Henry
La Grande, OR