
From: Bend Poker Room <bendpokerroom@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 6, 2017 4:46 PM
To: SGGA Exhibits
Subject: Vote no on HB2190

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Dear Committee Members,

My wife and I are owners of the Bend Poker Room. I am writing to ask you to vote no on HB2190. Please allow me to elaborate.

LeAnn and I are textbook small business owners. We had an idea; made a plan; got a loan; got all the necessary licenses and permits; signed a lease; opened the doors; have worked hard; paid off the loan; and so on. When I attended the public hearing for HB2190 in the Oregon House, only three individuals spoke in favor of the bill. All of them stated they were from La Center, Washington, where a large casino has just been built. This feels to me like a large business using their leverage to eliminate the competition from small businesses. In my opinion, the legislature should prevent this from happening, not enable it.

At that hearing, much of the discussion centered around comparing Oregon poker rooms with casinos. But the Social Gaming law in its current form creates a business model that is fundamentally different from the gaming industry. Casinos run games that have a house advantage. Customers may win in the short run but the casino will always win in the long run. This is accomplished in poker games by taking a few dollars out of the pot for each hand (called the rake). In a social game club like the Bend Poker Room, we charge players a door fee. All of the money that they enter into their poker game remains in the game - all the player money is returned to the players. Comparing us to a casino is truly comparing apples to oranges.

You may be aware that some of the poker rooms in Oregon are having issues around providing dealers for the games. By doing so, they may be in violation with the current law. I won't bother to elaborate except to say that this is not an issue at the Bend Poker Room, as well as other Oregon rooms, because players deal in our games. We have done this to be in compliance with both the letter and the spirit of the current law. If HB2190 passes because of concerns with this issue, the baby is being thrown out with the bath water.

Lastly, here's the thing about poker - poker is awesome. Unlike almost any other avenue in American society, poker brings together all ages, income levels, ethnicities, genders, and occupations. Every one is equal when they sit at the poker table. Poker is the great American card game for good reason - a poker game is truly a wonderful place to be.

Thank you for your time. I hope you will consider this information and reach the conclusion to vote no on HB2190.

Sincerely,
Paul Runge
Owner

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