

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to address you. My name is Tom Thomas , I live in Vancouver Washington and I am a 73 year old retired educator who has played poker for 50+ years and here to ask you to vote no against hb2 190. The amount of legislation you must deal with has to be overwhelming. It is often difficult to see what ramifications or consequences a bill will have going forward because there is no magic crystal ball to see into the future. You must rely on your own best judgment after gathering as much information as possible. This is not the case in regards to the so called "poker rooms" currently operated all over the state. If you have not visited one of these establishments I would encourage you to take time to do so and gather more information before you cast your vote. You will observe a cross section of folks enjoying themselves with no racial, economic, or age restrictions, other than being of legal age to play. Everyone is equal and has the same opportunity to be successful. The casinos are opposed to these rooms because it costs them money. I get it. However, that should not be reason enough to close them if they are meeting the needs of many. If there are issues to be addressed regarding these rooms fine, form a committee and have them come up with rules and policies that are current and in the best interests of all. If these poker rooms were not being operated safely, efficiently and above board they would die on their own. Instead, they continue to grow in popularity as they meet a need for a lot of folks for entertainment, socialization and competition. The current bill enriches only the casinos. It does not address the desires of the common citizen. I encourage making an informed vote. Thank you for your time and attention.