

To: Senate Committee for SB 2190

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Cynthia Thompson. I am here to voice my strong opposition to SB 2190. I urge you to VOTE NO and in addition I urge you to take action that will make Oregon a leader in this industry. There are so many benefits that are not seen or understood by the average person. Bring this industry into the 21st century and realize the potential social gaming and in particular Tournament Texas Hold-em has for economic development, job creation, tourism etc. if the policies and regulations were clarified and brought up to date to be in line with what is currently happening in this ever growing industry, which truly is a phenomenon.

The changes to ORS 167 are unnecessary and actually just complicate and make things worse not better. There is truly no good reason for this bill, it will not solve any of the current issues should social gaming be controlled by charitable, fraternal, or religious organizations or if games go to the basements and living rooms of everyday citizens. Attached is the Attorney Generals 2010 opinion regarding the laws that govern social gaming . It provides a good history and makes it very clear how contradictory and confusing the current rules are.

I urge you to take action on the following;

- 1.) VOTE NO ----to changes outlined in SB 2190 and delete the language proposed to be added to page 5 line 4 and 5 and line 16 and 18. That states "*premises operated and controlled by a charitable, fraternal or religious organization.*".
- 2.) Appoint a task force to develop policies and language to govern Social Gaming that will resolve the contradictory language in the current law and will resolve the myriad of issues and establish Social Gaming in Oregon as the positive industry it is and can be.
 - a. Propose representatives from the following stakeholder groups be included in this task force appointed by the legislature or Governor whichever is more appropriate
 - b. Poker Room Owners (3 reps from major markets urban and rural)
 - c. Dealer Representatives (2 reps)
 - d. Casino Poker Rooms (2 reps)
 - e. Players (4 reps from major markets- urban and rural)
 - f. Legislature Liaison (2 reps urban and rural)
 - g. City Regulator Representatives (2 reps from urban and rural)
 - h. Legal/Oregon Statute Expertise (2 reps)

Ensure that members also represent the diversity of typical tournament players so women, men, young, elderly, disabled, etc. are represented as part of the representatives listed above.

In addition, my hope is that when this task force is finished with their work social gaming and Tournament Texas Hold-em will be better understood. It will not be listed in the same category as other non-skill Casino gambling games where the House always wins. I find it interesting that ORS 167 statute that governs Social Gaming is titled Offenses against General Welfare and Animals. *It states; Casino game" means any of the traditional gambling-based games commonly known as dice, faro, monte, roulette, fan-tan, twenty-one, blackjack, Texas hold-'em, seven-and-a-half, big injun, klondike, craps, poker, chuck-a-luck, Chinese chuck-a-luck (dai shu), wheel of fortune, chemin de fer, baccarat, pai gow,*

beat the banker, panquinqui, red dog, acey-deucey, or any other gambling-based game similar in form or content.

Other states have avowed that poker passes the “preponderance test” and is therefore a game of skill. That does not mean that luck is not involved, but does mean that poker is not like other casino games where participants play against the house.

My story

I am 57 years old and grew up in southern Oregon and currently live in Portland Oregon. I am President of a woman owned business and have spent my career managing and consulting for Cities, Counties, and Special Districts to improve their public transit systems. My husband is retired and disabled and loves to play Texas Hold-em. When he first started playing about ten years ago, he played the Casino games, the limit poker style of game which is gambling in my opinion. But as he gained experience and knowledge he started playing Texas Hold-em tournaments and I witnessed a change. He is a good player and almost always is in the top third of the field and most of the time he makes it to the final table. I don't believe if it was a game of luck , that would be possible. I don't see professional slot machine players, or Casino limit poker players, but I do see professional poker players who make a very lucrative living playing tournament Texas Hold-em .

I was as skeptical as anyone in the beginning of this journey with my husband. I really believed it was gambling, but as I waited during 8 and 10 hour tournaments I got bored so I started playing myself. I don't play as often as my husband but my understanding of tournament Texas Hold-em has increased ten- fold. It is a much more complex game that absolutely requires knowledge and skill to succeed. I have been playing for about 5 or 6 years and I have played against some of the best players in Portland and I can tell you there players who are absolutely better than others and who win the tournaments on an regular basis. If it was pure chance and belonged in the casino games of chance that would not be possible. My respect for the game and the players has increased significantly. I am amazed by how much stamina, mental focus, understanding of human nature, strategy etc. is required to be successful. So many doctors, lawyers, judges, and people of all walks of life love the game. Because it is a challenge and fun.

In addition I find it interesting that video poker referenced as Video Crack on the street- Oregon seems to be Ok with having Video Crack in every bar, restaurant etc. And Indian Casinos across the state with the worst forms of gambling , the most risky forms of gambling- there are no limits to how much money a person can put into a video poker game. Extremely hypocritical of Oregon to accept this and not accept - texas hold-em tournaments where a person pays \$50 - \$80 to play in a tournament where they play for 6 to 10 hours which equates to less than \$10/hour. Show me one person who puts lets then \$20 into a video poker machine and gets to play for 5 minutes if that.

Thank you for your time

Cynthia Thompson

