

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1135
Ways and Means

(Delegates Shoemaker and Rose)

Carroll County – Gaming – Home Games – Bingo

This bill allows a home game of bingo in Carroll County if the game is conducted in a common area of a residential property that is restricted to residents who are at least 55 years old.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. No longer assessing monetary and/or incarceration penalties for bingo home game violations in Carroll County does not materially affect State finances.

Local Effect: None. It is assumed that incarceration penalties for bingo home game violations in Carroll County are rarely assessed, so local finances are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: An individual who is at least 21 years old may conduct a home game involving wagering if the home game (1) is limited to mah jong or a card game; (2) is conducted not more than once a week in the individual's home or in a common area of a residential property that is restricted to residents age 55 or older; (3) allows a player to compete directly against one or more other players who share a preexisting social relationship; (4) does not allow an individual to benefit financially in any way, directly or indirectly, other than from the winnings accrued by participating as a player in the game; and (5) has a \$1,000 limit on the total amount of money, tokens representing money, or any other thing or consideration of value that may be wagered by all players during any 24-hour period. The home game may not involve a player's use of an electronic device that connects to the Internet, the use of paid public advertising or promotions, the charging of specified fees, or the use of any money except money used for wagering.

A qualified organization is not prevented from conducting a gaming event for the exclusive benefit of a qualified organization if an individual or a group of individuals does not benefit financially from the gaming event or receive any of the proceeds from the gaming event for personal use or benefit.

A person who violates betting, wagering, and gambling laws is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction is subject to imprisonment for six months to one year and/or a fine of \$200 to \$1,000.

Before a qualified organization may conduct bingo in Carroll County, the organization must obtain a permit from the county commissioners. For purposes of conducting bingo, qualified organizations include bona fide volunteer fire companies; senior center site councils; and religious, educational, fraternal, patriotic, and charitable organizations. Bingo permit applicants are required to pay the fee set by the county, which must be set at a level sufficient to cover the costs of issuing the permit. Generally, the maximum prize awarded at a bingo event may not exceed \$100 in value. Prizes of up to \$250 are permitted for special bingo games, such as progressive pot games, and up to \$1,000 for bingo jackpots. Qualified organizations are permitted to hold up to 6 raffles per year where the major prize awarded is greater than \$2,500 or 10 raffles per year where the prize is less than \$2,500.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 545 of 2017, an identical bill as amended by the House Ways and Means Committee, passed the House and received a hearing in the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, but no further action was taken.

Cross File: SB 892 (Carroll County Senators) - Budget and Taxation.

Information Source(s): Comptroller's Office; Maryland State Lottery and Gaming Control Agency; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 26, 2019
mag/jrb

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