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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE BILL

No. 42

Session of  
1981

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INTRODUCED BY COCHRAN, JANUARY 19, 1981

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, JANUARY 19, 1981

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AN ACT

1 Relating to the lawful conduct of bingo, prescribing penalties  
2 and making a repeal.

3 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
4 hereby enacts as follows:

5 Section 1. Short title.

6 This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Bingo Law."

7 Section 2. Legislative intent.

8 The General Assembly hereby declares that the playing of  
9 bingo for the purpose of raising funds, by certain nonprofit  
10 associations, for the promotion of charitable or civic purposes,  
11 is in the public interest.

12 It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Legislature  
13 that all phases of licensing, operation and regulation of the  
14 game of bingo be strictly controlled, and that all laws and  
15 regulations with respect thereto as well as all gambling laws  
16 should be strictly construed and rigidly enforced.

17 The Legislature recognizes the possibility of association

1 between commercial gambling and organized crime, and wishes to  
2 discourage commercialization of the game of bingo; prevent  
3 participation by organized crime and prevent the diversion of  
4 funds from the purposes herein authorized.

5 Section 3. Definitions.

6 The following words and phrases when used in this act, shall  
7 have, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, the  
8 meanings given to them in this section:

9 "Association." A volunteer fire company or auxiliary  
10 thereof, ambulance association or a religious, charitable,  
11 fraternal, veterans, civic, county fair or agricultural  
12 association organized as a nonprofit organization which shall  
13 have existed, and conducted business in furtherance of their  
14 written constitution, charter, articles of incorporation or  
15 bylaw express purpose, for one year prior to application for a  
16 license.

17 "Bingo." A game in which each player has a card or board  
18 containing five horizontal rows all but the central one  
19 containing five figures. The central row has four figures with  
20 the word "free" marked in the center thereof. Any preannounced  
21 combination of spaces when completed by a player constitutes  
22 bingo. In the absence of a preannouncement of a combination of  
23 spaces, any combination of five in a row whether horizontal or  
24 vertical when completed by a player constitutes bingo when its  
25 four members are announced and covered. A wheel or other  
26 mechanical device may be used by any person conducting the game  
27 of bingo, and any such person may award to any player or players  
28 first completing any combination constituting bingo a prize so  
29 long as such prize awarded shall not exceed a value of \$1,000  
30 for any one such game of bingo except for jackpot games which

1 shall not exceed \$5,000 for one such game of bingo.

2 "Charitable purpose." Benevolent or philanthropic purpose.

3 "Civic purpose." Community purpose.

4 Section 4. Associations permitted to conduct bingo.

5 Any association, for a charitable or civic purpose, when  
6 licensed pursuant to this act, may conduct the game of bingo as  
7 herein defined.

8 Section 5. Rules for licensing.

9 (a) In every county, the county treasurer shall license,  
10 upon application, any eligible association as defined in section  
11 3 to conduct the game of bingo at one location in the county.  
12 The license fee to be charged to each nonprofit association  
13 shall be \$100 per annum. The license fee to be charged to each  
14 agricultural association or county fair shall be \$100 per annum.  
15 The fees collected pursuant to this section shall be paid by the  
16 county treasurer into the general fund of the county and used  
17 for county purposes.

18 (b) Licenses issued pursuant to this section shall be  
19 publicly displayed at games conducted by licensees.

20 (c) No association may hire any person not a bona fide  
21 member of the association to manage, set up bingo, operate or  
22 actually run the game of bingo.

23 (d) No license shall be issued to any association if:

24 (1) Any person under the age of 18 will be permitted by  
25 the association to play bingo unless accompanied by an adult.

26 (2) The facility in which any game of bingo is to be  
27 played does not have adequate means of ingress and egress or  
28 does not have adequate sanitary facilities available in the  
29 area.

30 (e) No person may be employed in the operation or the actual

1 running of a bingo game for compensation greater than \$50 per  
2 day or any part thereof, and any person compensated shall be  
3 paid individually.

4 Section 6. Revocation of licenses.

5 (a) The county treasurer shall revoke or refuse to renew the  
6 license of any association whenever he finds that:

7 (1) Any of the funds derived from the operation of the  
8 game of bingo are used for any purpose other than for  
9 charitable, civic or religious work.

10 (2) Any person under the age of 18 unaccompanied by an  
11 adult is playing bingo as herein defined.

12 (3) The facility in which any game of bingo is played  
13 does not have adequate means of ingress and egress or does  
14 not have adequate sanitary facilities available in the area.

15 (4) Greater compensation than is herein authorized has  
16 been paid to or received by any person, or that a person or  
17 persons other than those authorized in section 5 have been  
18 involved in managing, setting up, operating or running the  
19 game.

20 (b) The county treasurer may require the licensees to  
21 produce their books, accounts and records in order to determine  
22 whether a license should be revoked or renewal thereof denied.

23 Section 7. Penalty.

24 Any association violating the provisions of this act shall  
25 be guilty of a summary offense, and upon conviction thereof  
26 shall be sentenced to pay a fine not exceeding \$500 and shall  
27 forfeit any license issued to the association, and it shall be  
28 ineligible for a license renewal for one year thereafter.

29 Section 8. Additional powers of the district attorney.

30 The district attorney, upon receipt of any information to the

1 effect that the provisions of this act have been violated, may  
2 require the licensee to produce their books, accounts and  
3 records in order to determine whether criminal action should be  
4 pursued.

5 Section 9. Repeal.

6 The provisions of Title 18 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated  
7 Statutes (relating to crimes and offenses) are repealed to the  
8 extent that they are inconsistent with this act.

9 Section 10. Effective date.

10 This act shall take effect immediately.