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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE BILL

No. 963 Session of  
2015

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INTRODUCED BY MASSER, HEFFLEY, CALTAGIRONE, BARRAR, COHEN AND  
SAYLOR, APRIL 10, 2015

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON GAMING OVERSIGHT, APRIL 10, 2015

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AN ACT

1 Providing for the licensing and regulation of video gaming;  
2 prescribing powers and duties of the Pennsylvania State  
3 Police and the Department of Revenue; establishing the State  
4 Video Gaming Fund; and prescribing penalties.

5 TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 6 Section 1. Short title.
- 7 Section 2. Scope of act.
- 8 Section 3. Definitions.
- 9 Section 4. Video gaming.
- 10 Section 5. Licensing of manufacturers, operators and service  
11 technicians.
- 12 Section 6. Licensed establishment license.
- 13 Section 7. Limitations on licensed establishments.
- 14 Section 8. Central computer system.
- 15 Section 9. Video gaming machine prototype.
- 16 Section 10. Fees.
- 17 Section 11. Unlawful use by minors.
- 18 Section 12. Inducements prohibited.
- 19 Section 13. Multiple types of licenses prohibited.

- 1 Section 14. Illegal activities.
- 2 Section 15. Distribution of net profits.
- 3 Section 16. State Video Gaming Fund.
- 4 Section 17. Preemption of local taxes and license fees.
- 5 Section 18. Exemption from State gaming laws.
- 6 Section 19. Exemption from Federal regulation.
- 7 Section 20. Effective date.

8 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
9 hereby enacts as follows:

10 Section 1. Short title.

11 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Video Gaming  
12 Act.

13 Section 2. Scope of act.

14 This act authorizes the licensing and regulation of video  
15 gaming in this Commonwealth.

16 Section 3. Definitions.

17 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall  
18 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the  
19 context clearly indicates otherwise:

20 "Coin-operated amusement machine." A machine that requires  
21 the insertion of a coin, currency or tokens to play or activate  
22 a game, the outcome of which is primarily determined by the  
23 skill of the player. The term does not include a video lottery  
24 terminal.

25 "Department." The Department of Revenue of the Commonwealth.

26 "Fund." The State Video Gaming Fund established by this act.

27 "Gaming machine." A device or machine that has the outcome  
28 of play primarily determined by chance. The term includes an  
29 antique slot machine under 18 Pa.C.S. § 5513(c) (relating to  
30 gambling devices, gambling, etc.) when used for profit. The term

1 shall not include any of the following:

2 (1) A coin-operated amusement machine.

3 (2) A video lottery terminal that has all of its seals  
4 or identification plates.

5 (3) Slot machines as defined under 4 Pa.C.S. § 1103  
6 (relating to definitions).

7 (4) A game of chance under the act of December 19, 1988  
8 (P.L.1262, No.156), known as the Local Option Small Games of  
9 Chance Act.

10 (5) Lottery terminals used under the act of August 26,  
11 1971 (P.L.351, No.91), known as the State Lottery Law.

12 "Licensed establishment." A restaurant, bar, tavern, hotel  
13 or club that has a valid liquor or malt or brewed beverage  
14 license under Article IV of the act of April 12, 1951 (P.L.90,  
15 No.21), known as the Liquor Code.

16 "Manufacturer." An individual, partnership, association or  
17 corporation that:

18 (1) Is licensed by the Department of Revenue.

19 (2) Manufactures or assembles video gaming machines.

20 "Net profits." All money put into a video gaming machine  
21 minus the cash awards paid out to players.

22 "Operator." An individual, partnership, association or  
23 corporation licensed by the Department of Revenue to buy, sell,  
24 own, maintain, service or distribute video gaming machines for  
25 placement in licensed establishments. The term does not include  
26 a manufacturer.

27 "Secretary." The Secretary of Revenue.

28 "Service technician." An individual holding a service  
29 technician's license issued by the Department of Revenue  
30 allowing the individual to service, maintain and repair video

1 gaming machines.

2 "State Lottery." The lottery established and operated under  
3 the act of August 26, 1971 (P.L.351, No.91), known as the State  
4 Lottery Law.

5 "Video gaming machine." A device or machine that upon  
6 insertion of a coin or currency will play or simulate the play  
7 of a video poker, keno, blackjack or any other game authorized  
8 by the Department of Revenue that utilizes a video display and  
9 microprocessors and in which by the skill of the player or by  
10 chance the player may receive free games or credits that may be  
11 redeemed for cash. The term shall not include any of the  
12 following:

13 (1) Small games of chance as authorized under the act of  
14 December 19, 1988 (P.L.1262, No.156), known as the Local  
15 Option Small Games of Chance Act.

16 (2) Lottery games of the Pennsylvania State Lottery as  
17 authorized under the act of August 26, 1971 (P.L.351, No.91),  
18 known as the State Lottery Law.

19 (3) Bingo as authorized under the act of July 10, 1981  
20 (P.L.214, No.67), known as the Bingo Law.

21 (4) Slot machines or table games as authorized under 4  
22 Pa.C.S. (relating to amusements).

23 Section 4. Video gaming.

24 The department shall regulate and adopt standards for video  
25 gaming activities and provide for video gaming at licensed  
26 establishments as authorized under this act. With the exception  
27 of tickets indicating credits won, which are redeemable for  
28 cash, no machine may directly dispense coins, cash, tokens or  
29 anything else of value.

30 Section 5. Licensing of manufacturers, operators and service

1 technicians.

2 (a) Eligibility.--A person may apply to the secretary for a  
3 manufacturer's license, an operator's license or a service  
4 technician's license under this section on a form prescribed by  
5 the department.

6 (b) Requirements.--The following shall apply to licenses  
7 issued under this section:

8 (1) All licenses shall be issued at the discretion of  
9 the secretary. The secretary shall make a determination  
10 within 60 days of receiving all required information from the  
11 applicant. Nothing in this act is intended or shall be  
12 construed to create an entitlement to a license by any  
13 person.

14 (2) The secretary may refuse to issue a license under  
15 this section or may suspend or revoke a license if any of the  
16 following apply:

17 (i) The applicant or the applicant's business is not  
18 in compliance with all laws of this Commonwealth.

19 (ii) The secretary finds that the experience,  
20 character and general fitness of the applicant and any  
21 officers, directors, stockholders and partners of the  
22 applicant and any other person that shares or will share  
23 in the profits or participates or will participate in the  
24 management of the affairs of the applicant will not be  
25 consistent with the public interest.

26 (iii) The applicant or an officer, director,  
27 stockholder or partner of the applicant or any other  
28 person that shares or will share in the profits or  
29 participates or will participate in the management of the  
30 affairs of the applicant has done any of the following:

1 (A) Failed to comply with the terms of a license  
2 issued under this section.

3 (B) Violated any rule, regulation or order of  
4 the department.

5 (iv) A person other than the applicant shares or  
6 will share in the profits of the applicant other than as  
7 a bona fide owner of a financial interest in the  
8 applicant or participates or will participate in the  
9 management of the affairs of the applicant.

10 (3) The secretary may issue a temporary license upon the  
11 terms and conditions as the secretary deems necessary,  
12 desirable or proper to effectuate the provisions of this act.

13 (4) The secretary shall refuse to grant or renew a  
14 license issued under this section and may revoke a license if  
15 the applicant is not compliant with the tax laws of this  
16 Commonwealth.

17 (c) Term and application fees.--

18 (1) A license issued under this section shall be valid  
19 for a period of three years from the date of issuance and may  
20 be renewed for three-year terms upon application of the  
21 applicant.

22 (2) An applicant for a license under this section must  
23 pay a nonrefundable initial application fee of \$500 and a  
24 nonrefundable renewal application fee of \$100.

25 (d) Suitability.--In addition to any other specifications  
26 and qualifications established by the department, the  
27 Pennsylvania State Police shall conduct a background  
28 investigation of any applicant under this section, as follows:

29 (1) The applicant shall be required to consent to a  
30 background investigation of the applicant, its owners,

1 officers, directors, stockholders and partners and any other  
2 person that shares or will share in the profits or  
3 participates or will participate in the management of the  
4 affairs of the applicant and shall provide any and all  
5 information requested by the Pennsylvania State Police and  
6 consent to a release to obtain any and all information  
7 necessary for the completion of the background investigation,  
8 which shall include fingerprints.

9 (2) The background investigation shall include a  
10 security, criminal, credit and suitability investigation by  
11 the Pennsylvania State Police, which shall include records of  
12 criminal arrests and convictions, no matter where occurring,  
13 including Federal criminal history record information. None  
14 of the information obtained by the Pennsylvania State Police  
15 under this subsection shall be disclosed publicly nor be  
16 subject to disclosure under the act of February 14, 2008  
17 (P.L.6, No.3), known as the Right-to-Know Law.

18 (3) Each application for a license under this section  
19 must be accompanied by a nonrefundable fee in such amount as  
20 established by the Pennsylvania State Police for the cost of  
21 each individual requiring a background investigation. The  
22 reasonable and necessary costs and expenses incurred in any  
23 background investigation shall be reimbursed to the  
24 Pennsylvania State Police by the applicant.

25 (4) Upon completion of the background investigation, the  
26 Pennsylvania State Police shall determine whether the  
27 experience, character and general fitness of the applicant  
28 and its owners, officers, directors, stockholders and  
29 partners, and any other person that shares or will share in  
30 the profits or participates or will participate in the

1 management of the affairs of the applicant, are such that the  
2 participation of the applicant in the operations of video  
3 gaming under this act will be consistent with the public  
4 interest. The Pennsylvania State Police shall notify the  
5 department of its determination and may share information  
6 with the department to the extent permitted by Federal and  
7 State law as determined by the Pennsylvania State Police.

8 (5) In determining whether participation by an applicant  
9 is consistent with the public interest, the Pennsylvania  
10 State Police's standards shall include whether the applicant  
11 and its owners, officers, directors, stockholders and  
12 partners, and any other person that shares or will share in  
13 the profits or participates or will participate in the  
14 management of the affairs of the applicant:

15 (i) Have been convicted of a crime involving moral  
16 turpitude.

17 (ii) Have been convicted of illegal gambling  
18 activities, including with respect to lotteries, gambling  
19 devices, gambling or pool selling under 18 Pa.C.S. §§  
20 5512 (relating to lotteries, etc.), 5513 (relating to  
21 gambling devices, gambling, etc.) or 5514 (relating to  
22 pool selling and bookmaking) or the similar laws of  
23 another state.

24 (iii) Have been convicted of any fraud or  
25 misrepresentation in any context.

26 (6) The department may not issue a license to any  
27 applicant whose participation is deemed by the Pennsylvania  
28 State Police to be inconsistent with the public interest.  
29 Determination of suitability by the Pennsylvania State Police  
30 shall not entitle an applicant to receive a license under



1 this act.

2 (7) A finding of suitability is a privilege. No  
3 applicant has a vested or property right in being found  
4 suitable for licensure under this section. A determination of  
5 suitability or unsuitability shall not be subject to  
6 challenge or appeal.

7 (8) Upon any change in the owners, officers, directors,  
8 stockholders and partners of an applicant or any other person  
9 that shares or will share in the profits or participates or  
10 will participate in the management of the affairs of an  
11 applicant, the applicant shall consent to an updated  
12 background investigation and updated finding of suitability  
13 by the Pennsylvania State Police under this subsection. The  
14 department shall revoke the license issued to an applicant in  
15 the case of a finding that the applicant is no longer  
16 suitable under this paragraph.

17 (e) Employees.--An employee of an applicant who has or will  
18 have access to video gaming machines must receive and maintain a  
19 finding of suitability based on a background check from the  
20 Pennsylvania State Police consistent with the provisions of  
21 subsection (d). No employee of an applicant shall have access to  
22 video gaming machines until such time as the employee has  
23 received a finding of suitability from the Pennsylvania State  
24 Police.

25 Section 6. Licensed establishment license.

26 The department shall issue a license to any licensed  
27 establishment upon showing that its liquor or retail dispenser  
28 license is valid and is in good standing with the Pennsylvania  
29 Liquor Control Board. The annual fee for a licensed  
30 establishment shall be \$500 per video gaming machine.

1 Section 7. Limitations on licensed establishments.

2 (a) General rule.--Licensed establishments shall be subject  
3 to the following limitations:

4 (1) No licensed establishment may have more than 10  
5 video gaming machines.

6 (2) No applicant may hold more than one type of license  
7 authorized by this act.

8 (3) Each licensee must pay its license fee. Payment of  
9 the fee by a person, partnership or corporation other than  
10 the licensee is prohibited.

11 (b) Unlawful acts.--

12 (1) No licensed establishment shall permit:

13 (i) An individual under 21 years of age to operate  
14 or attempt to operate a video gaming machine.

15 (ii) An individual under 21 years of age to redeem  
16 or attempt to redeem credits or tickets won or to receive  
17 or attempt to receive cash or prizes from a video gaming  
18 machine.

19 (iii) A visibly intoxicated person to play a video  
20 gaming machine.

21 (iv) An individual to tamper with the connection of  
22 a video gaming machine to the central computer.

23 (2) In addition to any other penalties provided by law,  
24 a person who violates paragraph (1)(i), (ii) or (iii) commits  
25 a summary offense.

26 (c) Seizure, forfeiture and destruction of gaming  
27 machines.--Gaming machines shall be considered to be per se  
28 illegal. Gaming machines and the proceeds therefrom may be  
29 seized upon view as illegal contraband by agents of the  
30 department and any other law enforcement agency. The owner of a

1 gaming machine shall have no right to compensation for the  
2 seizure and destruction of a gaming machine or the proceeds of a  
3 gaming machine.

4 (d) Penalties.--

5 (1) In the case of a gaming machine seized from a  
6 licensed establishment, for a first violation, a penalty of  
7 at least \$1,000 and not more than \$5,000 and a suspension of  
8 the licensed establishment owner's liquor license for not  
9 less than seven consecutive days and, for each subsequent  
10 violation, a penalty of \$15,000 and a suspension of the  
11 liquor license for not less than 14 consecutive days.

12 (2) In the case of a gaming machine seized from a place  
13 of business other than a licensed establishment, for a first  
14 violation, a penalty of at least \$1,000 and not more than  
15 \$5,000 against the owner of the business from which the  
16 gaming machine was seized and, for each subsequent violation,  
17 a penalty of \$15,000.

18 Section 8. Central computer system.

19 The department shall utilize the central computer system  
20 utilized by the State Lottery. All licensed video gaming  
21 machines must be linked to the central computer system at the  
22 State Lottery.

23 Section 9. Video gaming machine prototype.

24 (a) General rule.--The department shall develop a prototype  
25 video gaming machine that includes hardware and software  
26 specifications. The specifications shall include the following  
27 provisions:

28 (1) All video gaming machines shall interact with the  
29 central computer system.

30 (2) Irremovable identification plates shall appear on

1 the exterior of the video gaming machine containing the name  
2 of the manufacturer and the serial and model number of the  
3 video gaming machine.

4 (3) Rules of play shall be displayed on the video gaming  
5 machine face or screen as promulgated by regulation of the  
6 department.

7 (4) A video gaming machine may not directly dispense  
8 coins, cash, tokens or any other article of exchange or value  
9 except for tickets. The tickets shall be dispensed by  
10 pressing the ticket-dispensing button on the machine at the  
11 end of one's turn or play. The ticket shall indicate the  
12 total amount of credits and the cash award and the player  
13 must turn in this ticket to the appropriate person at the  
14 licensed establishment to receive the cash award. The cost of  
15 the credit shall be 25¢ and the number of credits played per  
16 game shall not exceed 10.

17 (5) No cash award for any individual game may exceed  
18 \$1,000.

19 (6) All video gaming machines shall be designed and  
20 manufactured with total accountability to include gross  
21 proceeds, net profits, winning percentages and any other  
22 information the department requires.

23 (7) A video gaming machine shall pay out a minimum of  
24 85% of the amount wagered.

25 (8) All video gaming machines shall contain a prominent  
26 sign on the front of the machine with the following  
27 statement:

28 If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, help is  
29 available. Call (Toll-free telephone number provided by the  
30 State).

1 (b) Agreement with Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board.--The  
2 department may enter into an agreement with the Pennsylvania  
3 Gaming Control Board to develop and verify specifications for  
4 video gaming machines.

5 Section 10. Fees.

6 (a) Operator license fee.--The annual fee for an operator  
7 license shall be \$25,000 for the first 50 video gaming machines  
8 and an additional \$500 per video gaming machine license in  
9 excess of 50. An operator license permits the operator to sell  
10 video gaming machines to another licensed operator.

11 (b) Manufacturer license fee.--The annual fee for a  
12 manufacturer license shall be \$10,000.

13 (c) Service technician license fee.--The annual fee for a  
14 service technician license shall be \$100.

15 Section 11. Unlawful use by minors.

16 (a) Prohibition.--

17 (1) No individual under 21 years of age may use or play  
18 a video gaming machine.

19 (2) An individual who violates this subsection commits a  
20 summary offense.

21 (b) Licensees.--

22 (1) A licensed establishment may not, regardless of  
23 knowledge or intent, permit an individual under 21 years of  
24 age to play or use a video gaming machine.

25 (2) A licensed establishment that violates this  
26 subsection commits a misdemeanor of the second degree.

27 Section 12. Inducements prohibited.

28 (a) General rule.--No video gaming operator may offer or  
29 give any type of inducement or incentive to a licensed  
30 establishment to secure a machine placement agreement.

1 (b) Definition.--As used in this section, the term  
2 "inducement" or "incentive" means consideration from a licensed  
3 machine vendor to a licensed establishment owner as an  
4 enticement to solicit or maintain the licensed establishment  
5 owner's business. The term includes cash, gifts, loans and  
6 prepayment of commissions.

7 Section 13. Multiple types of licenses prohibited.

8 (a) Manufacturer restriction.--No manufacturer may be  
9 licensed as an operator or own, manage or control a licensed  
10 establishment. A manufacturer may be licensed only to sell to  
11 licensed operators.

12 (b) Operator restriction.--

13 (1) No licensed operator may:

14 (i) be licensed as a manufacturer; or  
15 (ii) own, manage or control a licensed  
16 establishment.

17 (2) A licensed operator shall be licensed only to  
18 contract with licensed establishments.

19 (3) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to  
20 prohibit a licensed operator from selling used equipment to  
21 another licensed operator.

22 (c) Establishment owner restriction.--No owner of a licensed  
23 establishment may be licensed as a manufacturer or operator. An  
24 owner of a licensed establishment may only contract with an  
25 operator or service technician to place and service equipment.

26 Section 14. Illegal activities.

27 No person may sell, distribute, service, own, operate or  
28 place on location a video gaming machine unless the person is  
29 licensed under this act and is in compliance with all  
30 requirements of this act.

1 Section 15. Distribution of net profits.

2 Net profits shall be calculated by subtracting cash awards  
3 from the total consideration played on the machine. The net  
4 profits from each video gaming machine shall be distributed in  
5 the following manner:

6 (1) Thirty-five percent to the licensed establishment.

7 (2) Twenty-five percent to the licensed operator.

8 (3) Forty percent to the Property Tax Relief Fund  
9 established by 4 Pa.C.S. § 1409 (relating to Property Tax  
10 Relief Fund).

11 Section 16. State Video Gaming Fund.

12 (a) Establishment.--The State Video Gaming Fund is  
13 established in the State Treasury.

14 (b) Deposit of fees.--The fees imposed and collected under  
15 section 10 shall be deposited into the fund.

16 (c) Deductions.--

17 (1) The department shall determine costs, expenses or  
18 payments to be deducted from the fund to the appropriate  
19 agency necessary to administer this act.

20 (2) The deductions made under this subsection shall not  
21 exceed 10% of the total funds available in the fund.

22 (3) The following costs and expenses shall be paid from  
23 the fund upon appropriation by the General Assembly:

24 (i) The costs and expenses to be incurred by the  
25 department in administering this act based upon a budget  
26 submitted by the department under subsection (d).

27 (ii) The costs and expenses to be incurred by the  
28 Pennsylvania State Police and the Office of Attorney  
29 General and not otherwise reimbursable under this act in  
30 administering, regulating and enforcing this act based

1           upon a budget submitted by the department under  
2           subsection (d).

3           (iii) The costs and expenses to be incurred by the  
4           Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board, if an agreement is  
5           entered into with the department under section 9(b), in  
6           carrying out its responsibilities under this act based  
7           upon a budget submitted by the department under  
8           subsection (d).

9           (d) Itemized budget reporting.--

10           (1) The department, the Pennsylvania Gaming Control  
11           Board, the Pennsylvania State Police and the Office of  
12           Attorney General shall prepare and annually submit to the  
13           chairman of the Appropriations Committee of the Senate and  
14           the chairman of the Appropriations Committee of the House of  
15           Representatives an itemized budget consisting of amounts to  
16           be appropriated out of the fund as provided for in subsection  
17           (a).

18           (2) As soon as practicable after receiving copies of the  
19           itemized budgets submitted under paragraph (1), the  
20           department shall prepare and submit to the chairman of the  
21           Appropriations Committee of the Senate and the chairman of  
22           the Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives  
23           analyses of and make recommendations regarding the itemized  
24           budgets.

25           (3) After determining the appropriate funding based on  
26           paragraphs (1) and (2), the funds shall be appropriated by  
27           the General Assembly to the appropriate department or agency.

28           (e) Funding for compulsive gambling programs.--The  
29           department shall allocate at least \$500,000 annually for the  
30           purpose of treating compulsive gambling in this Commonwealth.



1 This allocation shall be appropriated out of the fund as  
2 provided for in subsection (a).

3 (f) Interfund transfers.--Monthly, the State Treasurer shall  
4 transfer the remaining balance in the fund which is not  
5 allocated in subsections (c) or (e) to the State Lottery Fund  
6 established in section 311 under the act of August 26, 1971  
7 (P.L.351, No.91), known as the State Lottery Law.

8 Section 17. Preemption of local taxes and license fees.

9 (a) General rule.--Video gaming machines shall be exempt  
10 from taxes levied under the following:

11 (1) The act of August 5, 1932 (Sp.Sess., P.L.45, No.45),  
12 referred to as the Sterling Act.

13 (2) The act of December 31, 1965 (P.L.1257, No.511),  
14 known as The Local Tax Enabling Act.

15 (3) 53 Pa.C.S. Pt. III Subpt. E (relating to home rule  
16 and optional plan government).

17 (4) Any statute that confers taxing authority to a  
18 political subdivision.

19 (b) Exemption and limitation.--

20 (1) Video gaming machines are exempt from local  
21 licensing fees.

22 (2) Local licensing fees imposed on all other coin-  
23 operated amusement machines shall not exceed \$150.

24 Section 18. Exemption from State gaming laws.

25 Video gaming machines authorized under this act and their use  
26 as authorized under this chapter are exempt from 18 Pa.C.S. §  
27 5513 (relating to gambling devices, gambling, etc.).

28 Section 19. Exemption from Federal regulation.

29 The General Assembly declares that the Commonwealth is exempt  
30 from section 2 of the Gambling Devices Transportation Act (64

1 Stat. 1134, 15 U.S.C. § 1172 et seq.). Shipments of approved  
2 video gaming machines into this Commonwealth in compliance with  
3 sections 3 and 4 of the Gambling Devices Transportation Act (64  
4 Stat. 1134, 15 U.S.C. §§ 1173 and 1174) shall be deemed legal  
5 shipments into this Commonwealth.

6 Section 20. Effective date.

7 This act shall take effect in 60 days.