
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1256 Session of
2021

INTRODUCED BY DELOZIER, CIRESI, JAMES, KEEFER, McNEILL, MILLARD,
PICKETT, SAINATO, SCHWEYER AND WHEELAND, APRIL 21, 2021

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON GAMING OVERSIGHT, APRIL 21, 2021

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of December 19, 1988 (P.L.1262, No.156),
2 entitled "An act providing for the licensing of eligible
3 organizations to conduct games of chance, for the licensing
4 of persons to distribute games of chance, for the
5 registration of manufacturers of games of chance, and for
6 suspensions and revocations of licenses and permits;
7 requiring records; providing for local referendum by
8 electorate; and prescribing penalties," providing for social
9 card games and tournaments.

10 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
11 hereby enacts as follows:

12 Section 1. The act of December 19, 1988 (P.L.1262, No.156),
13 known as the Local Option Small Games of Chance Act, is amended
14 by adding a chapter to read:

15 CHAPTER 8

16 SOCIAL CARD GAMES AND TOURNAMENTS

17 Section 801. Definitions.

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

21 "Nonbanking card game." A card game where players play

1 against one another rather than against the house. Nonbanking
2 card games may include any of the following:

3 (1) Poker games.

4 (2) Hearts.

5 (3) Rummy.

6 (4) Pinochle.

7 (5) Bid Whist.

8 "Nonbanking card game tournament" or "tournament." A series
9 of card games held by a licensed eligible organization during a
10 consecutive period of time of not more than 24 hours and not
11 held as part of any other games of chance.

12 "Pyramid" or "build-up." A card game in which a prize must
13 be returned in order to play another game or to be eligible for
14 another bigger prize, or a game in which the prize must be
15 forfeited if a later game is lost.

16 "Social card game" or "card game." A nonbanking card game
17 that is played by members at the licensed premises of an
18 eligible organization.

19 Section 802. Authorization to conduct social card games.

20 (a) General rule.--Notwithstanding any provision of 18
21 Pa.C.S. (relating to crimes and offenses) or of this act or any
22 other law or regulation to the contrary, social card games may
23 be played at the licensed premises of an eligible organization
24 in accordance with the requirements of this chapter.

25 (b) Conditions.--

26 (1) Card games may only be played by and between members
27 of the eligible organization.

28 (2) No eligible organization or other person may have an
29 interest, financial or otherwise, in the outcome of a card
30 game.

1 (3) Only nonbanking card games may be played with
2 members playing against each other.

3 (4) Wagering shall be entirely at the discretion of each
4 player.

5 (5) The maximum prize or payout for a card game shall be
6 limited to \$100.

7 (6) No eligible organization may charge a fee for play.

8 (7) Not more than 10 members may play at a table in a
9 card game.

10 (8) Card games may only be played in a room set aside
11 for those activities at the licensed premises of the eligible
12 organization.

13 (9) Not more than five gaming tables may be made
14 available for the play of card games by the eligible
15 organization.

16 (10) No card games may be played between the hours of 1
17 a.m. and 1 p.m.

18 (11) No eligible organization or other person may
19 collect, obtain or charge a percentage of or shall collect or
20 obtain a portion of a wager or winnings of a player in a card
21 game, except a player may collect the player's own winnings.

22 (12) No eligible organization or other person may
23 collect or obtain any money from, or charge or impose a fee
24 upon, a person that either enables the person to play or
25 results in or from the person playing a card game. Nothing in
26 this paragraph shall be construed to preclude the collection
27 of a membership fee by the eligible organization that is
28 unrelated to participation in the play of a card game
29 authorized under this chapter.

30 (13) An eligible organization that allows the use of its

1 premises for the play of card games by its members in
2 accordance with this chapter shall submit a schedule of the
3 proposed dates of the card games and any card game
4 tournaments to the licensing authority.

5 (c) Required postings.--An eligible organization that
6 permits the play of card games at its licensed premises shall
7 prominently post the following in close proximity of card game
8 tables in the room designated to play card games:

9 (1) The wagering limits for each type of card game.

10 (2) The rules of play.

11 (3) Information on where a person can obtain help for
12 problem gambling, including the telephone number for the
13 Pennsylvania Compulsive Gambling Hotline.

14 (d) Prohibitions.--

15 (1) It shall be unlawful for an eligible organization
16 to:

17 (i) Obtain or collect any money or thing of value
18 from the conduct of card games at its licensed premises.

19 (ii) Knowingly permit a card game to be played in
20 violation of this chapter.

21 (iii) Fail to comply with the posting requirement in
22 accordance with subsection (c).

23 (iv) Engage in any act, practice or course of
24 conduct that would constitute fraud or deceit upon a
25 player in a card game.

26 (v) Allow a person under 21 years of age to play a
27 card game at the eligible organization's licensed
28 premises.

29 (vi) Knowingly allow a person to employ or attempt
30 to employ a device, scheme or artifice to cheat or

1 defraud a player in a card game.

2 (vii) Advertise a card game in violation of section
3 704.

4 (2) A licensed organization that violates paragraph (1)
5 shall be subject to the penalties imposed under section
6 702(d).

7 (e) Applicability.--The requirements of sections 502 and 503
8 shall not apply to social card games authorized under this
9 chapter.

10 Section 803. Authorization to conduct tournaments.

11 (a) General rule.--Notwithstanding any other provision of
12 law or regulation to the contrary, an eligible organization may
13 conduct nonbanking card game tournaments. A tournament conducted
14 by an eligible organization shall comply with all of the
15 following:

16 (1) Only nonbanking card games shall be played in the
17 tournament.

18 (2) Each card game shall be conducted in a fair and
19 honest manner and shall not be operated on a build-up or
20 pyramid basis.

21 (3) Each player in the tournament shall be given the
22 same chance of winning the tournament. Second-chance entries
23 or multiple entries shall be prohibited.

24 (4) The eligible organization shall conduct the
25 tournament and shall not contract with or permit another
26 person to conduct the tournament or a card game during the
27 tournament.

28 (5) Only the eligible organization may receive or have a
29 fixed or contingent right to receive, directly or indirectly,
30 any profit, remuneration or compensation from or related to a

1 card game in the tournament, except an amount that a person
2 may win as a player on the same basis as the other players.

3 (6) No eligible organization may hold more than five
4 tournaments annually.

5 (7) The tournament may not be conducted within seven
6 calendar days of another tournament conducted by the eligible
7 organization.

8 (8) The eligible organization may hold only one
9 tournament during a period of 24 consecutive hours, starting
10 from the time the tournament begins.

11 (9) At the conclusion of the tournament, the eligible
12 organization shall announce the name of the winning player
13 and the amount of winnings.

14 (10) The eligible organization shall limit the number of
15 tables used in the tournament to not more than five with not
16 more than 10 players at each table.

17 (11) The tournament shall only be held in a room at the
18 licensed premises designated by the eligible organization for
19 the conduct of card games.

20 (12) Players in the tournament shall be limited to the
21 members of the eligible organization.

22 (13) Players shall be at least 21 years of age.

23 (14) The tournament may not provide a direct financial
24 benefit to the eligible organization or other person, except
25 winning players in the tournament.

26 (15) The value of all prizes awarded for the tournament,
27 except for a Texas Hold'em tournament, may not exceed \$200.

28 (16) If the tournament involves Texas Hold'em, all of
29 the following shall apply:

30 (i) The payment of an entry fee or other

1 consideration for participating is prohibited.

2 (ii) The value of all prizes awarded to an
3 individual winner of the tournament or contest at a
4 single table may not exceed \$200 each day.

5 (17) The eligible organization shall ensure that
6 reasonable accommodations are made for players with
7 disabilities.

8 (b) Required postings.--Notwithstanding subsection (a), the
9 eligible organization shall prominently post the tournament
10 rules on a sign in the tournament playing room at least 24 hours
11 before the tournament begins. The sign shall be at least 30
12 inches by 30 inches, and the rules shall be easily readable. The
13 sign shall include all of the following:

14 (1) In permanent letters three inches high, the words
15 "Tournament Rules."

16 (2) Card game or games to be played in the tournament
17 and the rules of each card game.

18 (3) The prize for each card game and tournament.

19 (4) How winners will be determined.

20 (5) Any other tournament rules.

21 (c) Prizes.--Cash or merchandise prizes may be awarded for a
22 tournament subject to the following:

23 (1) The eligible organization shall distribute the
24 prizes awarded on the day the prizes are won.

25 (2) Donated or merchandise prizes shall not be
26 repurchased by the eligible organization.

27 (3) Only prizes that can be won shall be displayed in
28 the room where the tournament is held.

29 Section 2. This act shall take effect immediately.