

January 22, 2024

Senator Stanford, Chair
Senate Business, Financial Services, Gaming and Trade Committee
402 Legislative Building
Olympia, WA 98504

Re: SB 6183/SB 6190 - Charitable nonprofit raffles and sweepstakes

Dear Chairman Stanford,

We respectfully request a hearing to be scheduled for SB 6183 and SB 6190, recently introduced by Senator Ann Rivers. These bills will help make Washington a better place for charitable nonprofit organizations to fundraise and grow.

We represent local nonprofit organizations with diverse charitable missions ranging from helping children and people in need to conserving the environment. We all depend on effective fundraising to deliver services to our communities, and we hope to share with you some of our challenges with the current law and suggest common sense solutions that would support our missions.

This past year, we have successfully petitioned the Washington State Gambling Commission to improve Washington State rules for raffles that will:

1. Increase the maximum raffle ticket price from \$10 to \$25;
2. Increase the maximum raffle discounted ticket package from \$25 to \$100
3. Ease record-keeping burdens by reducing the time requirements to keep certain raffle ticket records from three years to one year;
4. Allow more guests to participate in member-only raffles by increasing the number of guests and spouses allowed, from 25 percent of total attendance to 50 percent;
5. Increase maximum limits for raffle prizes from \$40,000 per prize to \$60,000; and
6. Increase maximum limits for total raffle prizes from \$300,000 in a license year to \$400,000.

We respectfully request your support to make minor changes to the existing law that would be complementary to these rule changes above. This would allow charitable and tax-deductible nonprofit groups like ours to raise important funds for our work.

SB 6183 and SB 6190 would allow bona fide charitable nonprofit organizations like ours to:

- **Moderately increase ticket prices and event revenue to address inflation.** Current raffle ticket prices and maximum revenues allowed at raffle and bingo events were set decades ago. We are asking for these to be updated to account for inflation and match our recent successful petition to the Washington Gambling Commission. For example, the annual limit of \$5,000 for bingo and amusement games was set in 1974. With inflation that figure today would be over \$30,000. These current limits make some nonprofit fundraisers cost-prohibitive.
- **Allow for technology to support fundraising.** Current law contains a blanket prohibition on the use of the internet and wire transfers which can prohibit our nonprofit organizations from using modern payment tools to pay for raffle tickets in person at events or to advertise these events via email or on our websites and social media. Minor changes to these rules for legitimate nonprofit charitable fundraisers would be beneficial.
- **Allow nonprofits to compensate raffle ticket sellers.** Current law prohibits raffle ticket sellers at nonprofit fundraisers from being compensated, even though the raffle events are usually run by

paid nonprofit staff. This change will provide equity for these underpaid workers who are performing a valuable function for our nonprofit organizations.

- **Offer “enhanced raffles” to all charitable nonprofit organizations.** Currently, only the Special Olympics and groups serving those with disabilities are eligible to conduct enhanced raffles in Washington. We believe all bona fide charities deserve the opportunity to apply to the Commission to conduct enhanced raffles and grow significant revenue for their missions.
- **Simplify administrative and record keeping burdens.** Our organizations large and small are sometimes prohibited from holding bingo nights or other local raffles because of burdensome record keeping and notification requirements, some of which seem redundant and unnecessary. This bill would complement our rules request for some minor accommodations to these rules.
- **Conduct sweepstakes.** Currently, 49 states allow nonprofits to conduct free of cost mail-in sweepstakes where individuals can also make donations to a charity and their donation has no impact on the odds of winning. A similar concept of “promotional games of chance” is allowed in Washington state law for businesses, but not for charitable nonprofit organizations. Currently, national nonprofits must remove all Washington residents from their sweepstakes mailers or receive a fine, so we are trying to provide equity among all states to raise revenue equally for nonprofits.

We ask for your support of these bills to move through the legislative process so that our concerns can be heard through a hearing and a vote. With these bills, Washington nonprofits can better deliver on our missions to improve our communities and natural resources so that future generations can thrive.

Thank you for this opportunity. If you have questions, please contact any of our organizations or Matt Little with Ducks Unlimited at mlittle@ducks.org or 541-678-2322.

Sincerely,

Nonprofit Association of Washington

Washington State Community Action Partnership

Washington Initiative for Boys and Men

Washington State High School Clay Target League

American Bear Foundation

Anacortes Skate Park Improvement Project

Boys & Girls Club of the Columbia Basin

Cascade Forest Conservancy

Coastal Conservation Association

Columbia Basin Cancer Foundation

Columbia County Community Network

Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation

Delta Waterfowl

Ducks Unlimited

Elizabeth Gregory Home
Girl Scouts of Eastern WA
Howl For Wildlife
Iwamoto Go Outreach Foundation
Kiwanis Club of Dayton Washington
Lewis County Gospel Mission
Lewis County Seniors
Mt. Si Senior Center
National Deer Association
National Wild Turkey Federation - Washington State Chapter
Northeast Washington Wildlife Group
Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association
Northwest Washington Medical Society
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Safari Club International
Seattle Arts & Lectures
Seattle Go Center
Sportsmen's Alliance
STIX Diabetes Programs
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
The Mountaineers
West Seattle Timebank
Western Wildlife Outreach

Cc: Committee Members Senators Frame, Dozier, Boehnke, Gildon, Hasegawa, Lovick, MacEwan, Mullet