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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

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A N A C T

RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES -- NON-CHARITABLE BINGO

Introduced By: Representative William W. O'Brien

Date Introduced: February 27, 2026

Referred To: House Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 11 of the General Laws entitled "CRIMINAL OFFENSES" is hereby
2 amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 71

4 NON-CHARITABLE BINGO

5 **11-71-1. Definitions.**

6 The following definitions apply within this chapter:

7 (1) "Allowable electronic bingo aid" means an electronic device which satisfies the
8 following criteria:

9 (i) An electronic bingo aid must function primarily as an electronic aid or labor-saving
10 device that requires some interaction between the player and the device, but where the numbers are
11 drawn independently and apart from the device, and the device can only be utilized in a common
12 bingo game along with other players competing for a common, preannounced prize;

13 (ii) In addition to being tested and approved, an electronic bingo aid must provide for
14 accountability, integrity, security and fairness of the game. As such all electronic cards in play
15 during any bingo game must be fully accounted for at any time during and after the game by an
16 independent accounting means and must be fully verifiable at any time by an independent
17 verification means;

18 (iii) Electronic cards available to players shall be part of a predetermined deck, group or
19 series of cards, no two (2) of which shall be alike, and electronic cards shall not be arranged or

1 distributed so as to give any player preference to any particular card. All cards must have an equal
2 chance of winning;

3 (iv) In order to insure the integrity and fairness, the electronic aid shall preclude any
4 unauthorized transfer or substitution of electronic cards during (after the start of) any bingo game;

5 (v) As the primary function of the system must be to assist the bingo player as the player
6 plays bingo, the system must not generate the bingo numbers utilized in the game. Upon the player
7 calling “bingo”, the player's winning card must be simultaneously displayed to all players playing
8 bingo to allow all players the opportunity to verify the winning card;

9 (vi) The particular arrangement of numbers required to win a particular game shall be
10 clearly displayed on or through the electronic aid before the start of the game without the necessity
11 of any player action or inaction; and

12 (vii) The called bingo numbers must be presented on the electronic aid as they are
13 announced by the bingo caller without the necessity for any player action or inaction.

14 (2) “Bingo” means a game of chance in which each player receives a bingo card, either
15 paper, hard card, or electronic representation thereof. Each bingo card, whether paper card, hard
16 card or electronic representation thereof, is defined as a series of five (5) vertical rows of five (5)
17 predetermined numbers ranging from one through seventy-five (75). Numbers are drawn or
18 otherwise obtained by chance, from a set of consecutively numbered balls of essentially equal size,
19 weight, and shape, and publicly displayed or otherwise publicly made known. The player first
20 having a specified patterned of announced numbers appearing on their card, upon verification by
21 an authorized person and/or through electronic or computer verification means or otherwise, shall
22 be declared the winner.

23 (3) “Bingo equipment” means the receptacle from which the numbered objects are drawn,
24 the display board upon which the numbered objects are displayed, the master board or bingo rack
25 upon which the numbered objects are placed upon being drawn, bingo cards, electronic
26 representations or otherwise, and any and all computer and/or electronic systems which are utilized
27 as electronic aids in playing and verifying bingo, and any and all other articles essential to the
28 operation, conduct, and playing of bingo.

29 (4) “Director” means the director of the division.

30 (5) “Division” means the state lottery division of the department of revenue and/or any
31 successor in interest thereto.

32 (6) “Hosting facility” refers to the Lincoln gaming facility and the Tiverton gaming facility.

33 (7) “Non-charitable bingo operator” means a non-charitable entity authorized by the
34 division to host and conduct bingo.

1 **11-71-2. Operation of non-charitable bingo games.**

2 (a) The division shall have the power and authority to license, regulate, supervise and
3 exercise general control over the operation of non-charitable bingo at a hosting facility including,
4 but not limited to, the conduct of bingo, the distribution of prizes, and the use and licensing of bingo
5 equipment, the use and licensing of allowable electronic bingo aids, the licensing of a non-
6 charitable bingo operator as well as persons, firms, corporations in the business of the sale and
7 rental of bingo equipment. The Rhode Island state police shall have the power and authority to
8 investigate as to the direct or indirect ownership or control of any licenses and to revoke or suspend
9 any license for just cause after a hearing.

10 (b) Any non-charitable bingo operator approved by the division may promote, carry on, or
11 conduct the game of bingo provided as follows:

12 (1) Bingo is conducted at a hosting facility.

13 (2) No person under the age of eighteen (18) years shall be permitted to play the game.

14 (3) Notwithstanding any regulation to the contrary, the division shall have regulatory
15 authority over marketing regarding non-charitable bingo.

16 (c) Within one hundred eighty days (180) of enactment of this section, the division shall
17 promulgate regulations for non-charitable bingo.

18 **11-71-3. Allocation of non-charitable bingo revenue.**

19 (a) Notwithstanding the provisions of § 42-61-15, the division of lottery is authorized to
20 enter into an agreement to allocate non-charitable bingo revenue among the state, the state's
21 authorized non-charitable bingo operator, and the host municipalities.

22 (b) The allocation of non-charitable bingo revenue shall be:

23 (1) To the state, fifteen percent (15%) of non-charitable bingo revenue;

24 (2) To the non-charitable bingo operator, eighty-four percent (84%) of non-charitable
25 bingo revenue;

26 (3) To the town of Lincoln and the town of Tiverton collectively, one percent (1%) of non-
27 charitable bingo revenue, divided whereby the town of Lincoln receives eighty percent (80%) of
28 such allocation and the town of Tiverton receives twenty percent (20%) of such allocation; provided
29 that, the amounts received under this subsection shall be credited towards the Lincoln Minimum
30 and Tiverton Minimum, respectively, pursuant to § 42-61.2-7.

31 (c) Non-charitable gaming revenue allocated to the state shall be deposited into the state
32 lottery fund for administrative purposes and then the balance remaining into the general fund.

1 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES -- NON-CHARITABLE BINGO

- 1 This act would create a new chapter to provide for non-charitable bingo by the state lottery
- 2 division.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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