

Pennsylvania Department of Veterans of Foreign Wars Testimony
on Small Games of Chance Legislation HB 1598

*Testimony submitted for the PA House of Representatives
Gaming Oversight Committee hearing on October 30, 2019*



Submitted on October 28, 2019 by Department of Pennsylvania
Veterans of Foreign Wars State Adjutant John B. Getz, Jr.

Department of Pennsylvania Veterans of Foreign Wars
4002 Fenton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17109-5943 P - (717) 234-7927 F - (717) 234-1955
Web site: WWW.VFWPAHQ.ORG Email: ADJUTANT@VFWPAHQ.ORG



Good morning Chairman and Committee Members:

I am John Getz, State Adjutant of the Pennsylvania Department of Veterans of Foreign Wars. I have served in this role for many years, and have worked closely with our VFW Posts, other veterans' groups and this Legislature on small games of chance issues.

My formal comments about this bill today will be brief. First, we encourage any legislative efforts to open video gaming terminals to non-profit clubs to be separate from other small games of chance legislation. We prefer working on that issue in a bill that solely addresses V-G-Ts, not attached to legislation that incorporates proposals for other changes to the current small games of chance law.

As far as the components of House Bill 1598, specifically proposing increases in the small games of chance allowances, the Pennsylvania VFW fully supports these components. When you consider the tremendous financial and quality of life impact that donations from veterans' service organizations have on Pennsylvanians from all walks of life, the VFW sees these proposed increases as a win-win situation for everyone—the non-profits, the State Legislature and citizens across the Commonwealth.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of serving as State Adjutant of the Pennsylvania VFW is witnessing the amazing ways that VFW Posts donate to their community and their neighbors. Here are a few examples of where donations from non-profit VFW Posts have been directed:

- **Individuals and families battling cancer and other life-altering diseases, some involving babies and children**
- **Individuals and families whose lives were shattered by accidents and natural disasters**
- **Public safety units like fire companies, police departments and ambulance companies, who through these donations are better prepared to respond to the many ways that they serve and rescue citizens**
- **Non-profit human service organizations that assist the needy but whose budgets limit the outreach and support that they can do**
- **Youth activity groups who need donations to provide the resources that they need to help our kids and teens develop skills to lead enjoyable, responsible lives, who one day will serve our communities**
- **Donations to food pantries and other community support programs that help our seniors and less fortunate persons to receive life-essential support**
- **The list goes on and on - The need is there and continues to grow**
- **Small game of chance is a great way to meet these needs.**

Your past support of increasing the prize and income limits for small games of chance operators has touched many thousands of lives, while helping our non-profits like VFW Posts to continue operating by using a portion of the earnings.

We want you to fully grasp the scope of the positive impact that donations made possible by small games have had on those you serve.

We want you to appreciate how the small games of chance earnings that non-profits can use to keep operating sustain these community resources as positive forces in their neighborhoods.

When you allow our VFW Posts and other non-profits to increase small games prizes and earnings that they can use—you are making Pennsylvania's 67 counties better places to live. And, you help grow this source of community assistance without increasing government budgets at the local, county or state level.

You, as State lawmakers, have made this possible. Thank you. You can now help to grow the beneficial aspects of small games.

Thank you for allowing the Veterans of Foreign Wars to be a part of this hearing today.

I also want to thank each of you for your past support of veterans' organizations and the issues we pursue to support veterans and their families, and to improve the communities in which they live.

Committee members, this is the extent of my formal testimony today. I will be happy to respond to your questions. And, thank you for your service to the Commonwealth as a Pennsylvania lawmaker.