

CHARLES SPADONE ELKS TESTIMONY

CHAIRMAN and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee

My name is Charles Spadone and I am a resident of Prince Georges County.

I have served proudly as an ELK for 24 years, having served in assignments at the local , State Association and National Level.

ELKS Lodges in Prince Georges County have proudly supported our Veterans for over 70 years.

We support Charlotte Hall Veterans home, Fisher House and ACCESS House. Veterans are invited to our lodge for social events and we provide monetary as well as volunteer support to these facilities. ELKS work with Federal Government HUD to provide support for homeless Veterans and their families in the form of outfitting new homes, assistance with electricity, furniture, toiletries, furthering education and rental relief. We also work with Prince Georges County Department of Veterans affairs in Clinton and we are developing a program with local military bases to extend our reach to help deployed Veterans.

ELKS have served proudly in Prince Georges county since 1947 working with Prince Georges County schools and government for over 50 years to provide support for special needs elementary middle and high school students.

We have also worked with schools to provide drug awareness literature, scholarships and access to youth programs like ELKS Camp Barrett and a National Hoop Shoot basketball contest.

ELKS work to recognize Law Enforcement personnel for superior service in combating Drugs, participating in the National Night Out Program and providing collection points to turn in illegal drugs.

Elks work with the Boy Scouts to conduct canned food drives, collecting thousands of pounds of food each year.

We conduct Americanism and Drug Awareness essay contests in schools to instill a sense of patriotism in students and to educate them on the evils of drug abuse and opiod addiction.

Fraternal and social organizations like ours, began with a lot more volunteer help and donations than many organizations are able to muster today. That translates to having to pay more to keep things going. This along with the higher costs of operating facilities puts a strain on non-profit organizations like ours to meet expenses.

A revenue stream like this will help to attract more members to lodges to relax. This in turn creates the opportunity for increases in membership and enlarges our charity footprint by virtue of having more people involved and additional revenues to apply towards charitable causes.

We are here today asking that you help support this Gaming Legislation.

I appreciate you hearing our testimony and considering our request for passage of house bill 0340.

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Thank you.