

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2018 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 143
Ways and Means

(Montgomery County Delegation)

Budget and Taxation

Carroll County and Montgomery County – Gaming – Bingo Games MC 13–18

This bill allows an individual in Carroll or Montgomery counties who is at least 21 years old to conduct a bingo game involving cash prizes if the bingo game (1) is conducted not more than once a week in a common area of a residential property that is restricted to residents age 55 or older; (2) allows a player to compete directly against one or more other players who are residents of the property where the game is held; (3) does not allow an individual to benefit financially in any way, directly or indirectly, other than from the winnings accrued by participating as a player in the game; and (4) has a \$1,000 limit on the total amount of money, tokens representing money, or any other thing or consideration of value that may be won by all players during any 24-hour period. The bingo game may not involve a player’s use of an electronic device that connects to the Internet, the use of paid public advertising or promotions, the charging of specified fees, or the use of any money except money used for purchasing bingo cards, food, or drinks. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2018.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill only affects local government operations.

Local Effect: None. It is assumed that incarceration penalties for bingo game violations in Carroll and Montgomery counties are rarely assessed, so local finances are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: An individual who is at least 21 years old may conduct a home game involving wagering if the home game (1) is limited to mah jong or a card game; (2) is conducted not more than once a week in the individual's home or in a common area of a residential property that is restricted to residents age 55 or older; (3) allows a player to compete directly against one or more other players who share a preexisting social relationship; (4) does not allow an individual to benefit financially in any way, directly or indirectly, other than from the winnings accrued by participating as a player in the game; and (5) has a \$1,000 limit on the total amount of money, tokens representing money, or any other thing or consideration of value that may be wagered by all players during any 24-hour period. The home game may not involve a player's use of an electronic device that connects to the Internet, the use of paid public advertising or promotions, the charging of specified fees, or the use of any money except money used for wagering.

Montgomery County

Qualified organizations can conduct bingo, including the sale of instant bingo tickets on bingo nights, in Montgomery County if they receive a license from the county. The maximum award per game of bingo is \$1,000. Qualified organizations must be bona fide nonprofit organizations and include volunteer fire companies and rescue squads and religious, fraternal, patriotic, educational, and charitable organizations.

Bingo can only be conducted for charity or for the benefit of the qualified organization. The person conducting bingo must be a county resident and a member of the qualified organization and cannot benefit financially from conducting the game. A qualified organization cannot conduct bingo more than twice in any week and must keep accurate records for two years of all transactions that occur during a bingo game. These records must be made available on request to specified county and State officials and agencies. None of these provisions applies to bingo conducted at the annual Montgomery County Fair for the benefit of the Montgomery County Agricultural Center.

Carroll County

Before a qualified organization may conduct bingo in Carroll County, the organization must obtain a permit from the county commissioners. For purposes of conducting bingo, qualified organizations include bona fide volunteer fire companies; senior center site councils; and religious, educational, fraternal, patriotic, and charitable organizations. Bingo can only be conducted for charity or to further the purpose of the qualified organization. Bingo permit applicants are required to pay the fee set by the county, which must be set at a level sufficient to cover the costs of issuing the permit. Generally, the maximum prize awarded at a bingo event may not exceed \$100 in value. Prizes of up to

\$250 are permitted for special bingo games, such as progressive pot games, and up to \$1,000 for bingo jackpots.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: A similar bill, HB 350 of 2017, passed the House and received a hearing in the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, but no further action was taken.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Montgomery County; Comptroller's Office; Maryland State Lottery and Gaming Control Agency; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 26, 2018
mag/jrb Third Reader - March 22, 2018
Revised - Amendment(s) - March 22, 2018

Analysis by: Heather N. Ruby

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510