

SENATE BILL NO. 262
SENATE FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Wednesday, March 11, 2015

State Capitol Building

Room 144 (S)

Testimony by
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The American Legion Department of Kansas

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee for providing The American Legion this opportunity to voice our organization's stringent opposition to Senate Bill 262 in its current form.

Last year when the citizens of Kansas voted to amend our state's Constitution to legalize raffles by certain nonprofit groups to support their charitable programs they voted to approve raffles. Voters did not call for a complete overhaul the Bingo statutes of the State of Kansas. The American Legion strongly opposes any attempt to include any change to Kansas' Bingo laws by using the message Kansas voters voiced to approve raffles.

IF the Bingo laws of Kansas merit change they deserve a separate and distinct Bill. Likewise Raffles deserve and merit a stand alone Bill outlining the rules and regulations that are to govern raffles.

The Bingo laws of Kansas have been shaped and modified over the years to accommodate both large and small operators. However the proposed provisions of SB 262 only favors large operators and those who own Bingo parlors. If enacted SB 262 would force more Bingo operations, those that provide entertainment in small communities and funding for charitable programs, out of business or into parlors with the hope of maintaining their programs.

The passage of fair and equitable raffle rules and regulations should not be held hostage to those who wish to expand Bingo for personal gain at the expense of smaller operations. That was not the intent of Kansas voters last year.

American Legion and American Legion Auxiliaries across the State of Kansas use Bingo to support veterans' programs such as Christmas Gift Shops at Kansas' three VA Medical Centers, the Kansas Veterans Home in Winfield and the Kansas Soldiers Home at Ft. Dodge in addition to local charitable programs. The funds generated by our Posts and Units are also used to sponsor students to Boys and Girls State, the Cadet Law Enforcement Academy conducted with the Kansas Highway Patrol, scholarships, and sports such as little league and American Legion Baseball.

The American Legion asks you to do the right thing by requiring those who wish to change Bingo laws to do so with a Bingo Bill, and not tag along with the intent of the Constitutional Amendment to legalize raffles.