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Proudly Serving Charitable Gambling Organizations Throughout Minnesota

Thursday, August 13, 2009

To the Editor:

During the 2009 Legislative Session, Allied Charities of Minnesota pushed an initiative that would have created electronic bingo gaming in Minnesota for licensed charitable gambling organizations. We believed that allowing for the electronic presentation of one of our current games should have been non-threatening to our competitors; while at the same time providing our industry with a necessary and much needed boost in revenues.

With increased revenues from electronic bingo, we would have had the opportunity to reduce and reform our extremely onerous charitable gambling tax structure which would have added to our bottom line for the programs and activities we support in our communities. This legislation would not only increase funding for donations to the community organizations we help, it would also greatly simplify the state taxes that charitable gambling organizations pay.

Unfortunately, because of the opposition of the Fond du Lac Indian Tribe our electronic bingo initiative was not even heard in the Minnesota State Senate, while at the same time it was moving without any major opposition in the Minnesota House.

It is regrettable that an Indian Tribe can oppose electronic bingo and have the influence to effectively block the needs of communities throughout the state that rely on funds from charitable gambling. We can understand why a tribe would be opposed to video lottery or a state run casino, but do not understand why they would be fearful of a game that started charitable gambling in Minnesota back in the 1940's.

Charitable gambling organizations and recipients of our funds must renew and redouble efforts to pass our electronic bingo initiative in conjunction with tax reduction and reform during the 2010 session. This legislative package is critical if non-profits are going to continue to rely on charitable gambling as an effective broad based fund-raising tool in their communities.

Sincerely,

Richard E. Horn

President - Allied Charities Of Minnesota