

ILCAAAP

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Subject: letter to editor

SB 1738 hides video gambling information from the public

For many years organized crime profited from illegal video gambling machine operations in Illinois. The Chairman of the Gaming Board said it was 'almost impossible' to keep the mob out of video gambling. That is why transparency is needed now that the video gambling machines are legal.

Currently, monthly Video Gambling reports are issued and posted on the Illinois Gaming Board's web site. The reports list the names of each establishment, amount of money gambled, amount won, net wagering activity, State and Municipality's share of taxes.

SB 1738 prohibits the Board from disseminating information relating to video gambling that is specific to individual licensed locations, and only allows information that is aggregated based on the municipality or county.

It is important for the public to see how much money is being gambled and lost at each establishment. For example, gamblers have lost over \$400,000 in 5 months on 5 video gambling machines in the Road Ranger truck stop near Camp Butler in Springfield.

Why would video gambling interests want to hide this information from the public? Without this transparency, we are concerned that money laundering and organized crime will gain a foothold in video gambling. Riverboat casinos must reveal monthly financial information, and so should video gambling establishments.

Establishments are getting 35 percent of the revenue from video gambling (municipalities get 5%), and these funds could pay for security measures. Video gambling establishments need to take responsibility to safeguard the funds in their establishments such as making daily or twice a day deposits, contracting with an armored car for delivery to banks, installing surveillance equipment, or hiring security staff.

Lawmakers should not change the law to prevent the public from knowing how much money is LOST and how much profit video gambling interests are making at each location. We call upon the Governor, Attorney General and Legislators to safeguard the public and oppose SB 1738 to suppress video gambling information.

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