

Senator Jesse Bjorkman

Alaska State Legislature

Session Address:

Alaska State Capitol, Rm. 427
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
Phone: (907) 465-2828
Toll Free: (800) 964-5733

**Interim Address:**

145 Main Street Loop, Ste. 226
Kenai, Alaska 99611-7771
Phone: (907) 283-7996
Fax: (907) 283-8127

Sponsor Statement

SB 170 "An Act relating to gaming; relating to bingo; relating to pull-tabs and electronic pull-tab systems; and providing for an effective date."

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Charitable gaming in Alaska is vitally important to many non-profit organizations that are interwoven in Alaskan culture. High school and club youth sports, the Alaska Baseball league, senior citizens centers, fraternal and veteran organizations, etc... all raise money to benefit people across Alaska.

The goal of Senate Bill 170 is to modernize charitable gaming laws to provide the maximum benefit for non-profits while also retaining limits on charitable gaming that keep it fun and away from the pitfalls of full-blown casino gambling.

Pull-tabs, also known as "Rippies", are a common method of charitable gaming. Between 85 and 90 cents of every dollar spent is given back to players in winnings. Non-profits and businesses that supply and sell pull-tabs need to split what remains to generate revenue. This split used to be more than enough to meet the mission of nonprofits. A paper pull-tab used to cost less than one cent, now they cost more than a nickel. The rising cost of paper pull-tabs, labor, and utilities have all made it increasingly difficult for charities to raise money from paper pull-tabs.

Electronic pull-tabs (e-tabs) are an effective way to modernize pull-tabs and make charitable gaming viable again. E-tabs played on tablets are fun as well as socially engaging. They maintain the spirit and play experience of traditional rippies while bringing in more revenue for charitable organizations.

Six other states have already made changes to their charitable gaming statutes to allow for e-tabs. We have taken the best examples from those models and included what has worked well for other states in this legislation.

I urge you to support these much-needed changes to support youth sports and other non-profits across Alaska.