

February 4, 2023

Senator Stanford, Chair  
Senate Business, Financial Services, Gaming and Trade Committee  
402 Legislative Building  
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Chairman Stanford,

We respectfully request a hearing to be scheduled for [SB 5704](#), sponsored by Senators Rivers, Lovick, Dozier, Shewmake, Cleveland, Torres and King. This bill will help make Washington a better place for charitable nonprofit organizations to fundraise and grow.

We represent local nonprofit organizations with diverse charitable missions ranging from helping people in need to conserving the environment. We all depend on effective fundraising to deliver services to our communities and we ask for a hearing so that we can share with you some of our challenges with the current law and can suggest common sense solutions such as those contained in this bill.

Washington ranks as the worst state in creating barriers for nonprofits like ours to raise much-needed funds. Unlike other states, our charitable organizations cannot hold sweepstakes or online raffles and we often cannot find volunteers to help run a bingo night or local auction because of the onerous rules and record keeping required by the Washington State Gambling Commission. As a result, our organizations have collectively missed out on raising millions of dollars of funding each year that would have helped implement our charitable missions.

We respectfully request your support to make minor changes to the existing rules, which would allow charitable and tax-deductible nonprofit groups like ours to raise important funds for our work. This bill would allow us to:

- **Conduct online raffles and fundraisers.** During the pandemic and in other situations, our organizations cannot meet in person, but we still need to raise revenue to operate. Allowing our events to proceed online in addition to in-person will allow more people to participate so we can raise funds for our missions.
- **Conduct sweepstakes.** Current law allows Washington businesses to hold sweepstakes through the mail or otherwise, but the Washington Attorney General's current interpretation of the law specifically prohibits Washington nonprofit businesses from doing the same.
- **Simplify record keeping requirements.** Our organizations large and small are sometimes prohibited from holding even the simplest bingo or other local fundraising event because of the many pages of regulatory record keeping requirements, some of which seems unnecessary, redundant, and burdensome. This bill would require the agency to propose ways to streamline these regulations.
- **Increase total allowed revenue from these events to match inflation.** Current law and regulations limit raffle ticket prices and total revenue allowed for events at such low levels that they are sometimes not worth the effort. For example, the annual limit of \$5,000 for bingo and amusement games was set in 1974, and with inflation that figure today would be almost \$30,000.

- **Allow for technology to support fundraising.** Current law prohibits our organizations from using basic technological advances like the telephone, credit card, internet or software to conduct some of our most important fundraising functions and events.

This is only a small list of the things this bill would do to help our charitable organizations survive.

We ask for your support of this bill to move through the legislative process so that our concerns can be heard through a hearing and a vote. This way, Washington nonprofits can better deliver on our missions to improve our communities and natural resources so that future generations can thrive.

Thank you for this opportunity. If you have questions, please contact Matt Little with Ducks Unlimited at [mlittle@ducks.org](mailto:mlittle@ducks.org) or 541-678-2322.

Sincerely,

Nonprofit Association of Washington

Boys & Girls Club of the Columbia Basin

Ducks Unlimited Inc

Cascade Forest Conservancy

Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

The Mountaineers

Coastal Conservation Association

Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation

Association of Northwest Steelheaders

Sportsmen's Alliance

Howl For Wildlife

Northeast Washington Wildlife Group

American Bear Foundation

Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Safari Club International

Washington Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

Cc: Committee Members Senators Frame, Dozier, Boehnke, Gildon, Hasegawa, Lovick, MacEwan, Mullet