

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

An Act To Authorize Low-stakes Cribbage Games by Charitable and Fraternal Organizations

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 17 MRSA §333-A, first ¶, as enacted by PL 2007, c. 205, §1, is amended to read:

The Chief of the State Police may issue a license to conduct tournament games as provided in this section to an organization eligible to conduct beano games under chapter 13-A and games of chance under this chapter. For purposes of this section, "tournament game" means a game of chance played using a deck of cards with rules similar to poker or ~~other card games~~cribbage. The Chief of the State Police may not issue a tournament game license to an organization for poker more than once per month. The Chief of the State Police may issue a tournament game license for cribbage only once per calendar year and only if the purpose of the license is to host a tournament for the benefit of a national organization representing competitive cribbage players.

Sec. 2. 17 MRSA §333-A, sub-§4, as enacted by PL 2007, c. 205, §1, is amended to read:

4. Tournament. The organization licensed to conduct a tournament game under this section shall display the rules of the game and the license issued to conduct the tournament. The maximum number of players allowed is 100 for poker games and 1,000 for cribbage. Winners are determined by a process of elimination. The use of currency is prohibited as part of tournament play. The maximum entry fee to play in the tournament is \$100, except the organization may add \$5 to the entry fee to defray the cost of the license application. Only one entry fee is permitted per person. A tournament must be completed within 48 hours. Other games of chance are prohibited, except for lucky seven or similar sealed tickets.

Sec. 3. 17 MRSA §339, as amended by PL 1997, c. 684, §6, is further amended to read:

§ 339. Fees; games of cards

1. Original application fee. The original application for a license to operate a game of chance must be accompanied by a fee of \$7.50. This is not a fee for a license and is not refundable.

2. Operation of games of chance. Except as provided in subsection 3, the fee for a license to operate a game of chance is \$15 for each week computed on a Monday to Sunday basis or portion thereof. The license may be issued for a calendar month for a fee of \$60 or for a calendar year for a fee of \$700.

Any combination of monthly or weekly licenses may be issued. Except as provided in subsection 3, licenses to conduct any authorized game of chance may be issued for a period not to exceed 6 months on one application.

2-A. Operation of electronic video machines. The fee for a game of chance license to operate an electronic video machine is \$15 for each week computed on a Monday to Sunday basis or portion of a week. The license may be issued for a calendar month for a fee of \$60.

Any combination of monthly or weekly licenses may be issued. Licenses to operate an authorized electronic video machine may be issued for a period not to exceed 6 months on one application.

3. Games of cards. ~~The fee for a license issued to an organization to operate a game of cards, when the organization charges no more than \$1 daily entry fee for participation in the games of cards and when no money or valuable thing other than the \$1 daily entry fee is gambled by any person in connection with the game of cards, is \$7.50 for each calendar year or portion thereof. An organization, as defined in section 311, may operate a game of cards for up to 60 players at any one time and may award prizes to the players as long as:~~

- ~~A. The organization charges each player no more than \$5 per day as an entry fee;~~
- ~~B. Prizes are awarded exclusively from the entry fees; and~~
- ~~C. Each player gambles in the game no more than the \$5 entry fee on any one day.~~

The fee for a license to operate a game of cards under this subsection is \$30 for each calendar year or portion thereof.

4. Distributors. The fee for a license issued to a distributor is \$625 for each calendar year or portion thereof.

5. Printers. The fee for a license issued to a printer is \$15 for each calendar year or portion thereof.

6. Application. Licenses to operate any authorized game of chance may be issued for a period not to exceed 6 months on one application.

All fees required by this section must accompany the application for any license issued by authority of this chapter.

Fees submitted as license fees must be refunded if the license is not issued. Rebates may not be given for any unused license or portion of an unused license. If any license is suspended or revoked as provided by this chapter, fees paid for licenses issued may not be refunded.

Sec. 4.17 MRSA §341, sub-§1, as amended by PL 1999, c. 716, §9, is further amended to read:

1. Limits. A licensed game of chance is limited as to the amount to be gambled for any one chance to \$1, except that an organization may operate and conduct a game of cards ~~and charge no more than \$1 daily entry fee for participation in a game of cards, as long as no money or valuable thing other than \$1 daily entry fee is gambled in connection with a game of cards~~ in accordance with section 339, subsection 3.

SUMMARY

This bill makes the following changes to the laws governing games of cards, including cribbage, sponsored by charitable and fraternal organizations.

1. It increases the allowable daily entry fee from \$1 to \$5.
2. It increases the license fee from \$7.50 to \$30.
3. It specifies that a game of cards may not consist of more than 60 players at any one time.

This bill also authorizes the Chief of the State Police to issue a tournament game license for cribbage, with a maximum of 1,000 players, once per calendar year.