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Legislative Document

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S.P. 825

In Senate, December 5, 2025

An Act Regarding the Prohibition of Online Sweepstakes Games

Submitted by the Department of Public Safety pursuant to Joint Rule 203.

Received by the Secretary of the Senate on December 3, 2025. Referred to the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D M Grant", is positioned above the printed name of the Secretary of the Senate.

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator HICKMAN of Kennebec.

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

Sec. 1. 5 MRSA §20006-B, sub-§1, as amended by PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. AA, §24, is further amended to read:

1. Fund established. The Gambling Addiction Prevention and Treatment Fund, referred to in this section as "the fund," is established for the purpose of supporting gambling addiction analysis, prevention and treatment to be administered by the department. The fund is a dedicated, nonlapsing fund into which payments are received in accordance with Title 8, section 1036, subsection 2 and Title 8, section 1402, subsection 1.

Sec. 2. 8 MRSA c. 39 is enacted to read:

CHAPTER 39

ONLINE SWEEPSTAKES GAMES PROHIBITED

§1401. Definitions

As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

1. Board. "Board" means the Gambling Control Board established under section 1002.

2. Direct consideration. "Direct consideration" means a coin, token or other representation of value that may be purchased by a person or received through a bonus or promotion and that is used for playing or participating in an online sweepstakes game.

3. Dual-currency system of payment. "Dual-currency system of payment" means a system of payment that allows a person to play or participate with direct consideration or indirect consideration or that is otherwise designed in a manner that:

A. Prevents a person from directly purchasing coins, tokens or other representations of value that are redeemable for any cash prize, cash award or cash equivalents or the chance to win any cash prize, cash award or cash equivalents; and

B. Encourages a person to purchase services, products, coins, tokens or other representations of value that are not exchangeable for a prize, award, cash or cash equivalents or a chance to win a prize, award, cash or cash equivalents in order for that person to obtain the coins, tokens or other representations of value that are exchangeable for prizes, awards, cash or cash equivalents or a chance to win a prize, award, cash or cash equivalents.

The unit may adopt rules to further define what constitutes a dual-currency system of payment. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are major substantive rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

4. Indirect consideration. “Indirect consideration” means a coin, token or other representation of value that:

A. Is provided for free through a promotion or bonus or with the purchase of a related product, service or activity; and

1 B. May be exchanged for a prize, award, cash or cash equivalents or a chance to win a
2 prize, award, cash or cash equivalents.

3 As used in this subsection, "related product, service or activity" includes a coin, token or
4 other representation of value that may be used for direct consideration.

5 **5. Licensee.** "Licensee" means a person that holds any one of the following licenses:

6 A. A license issued under chapter 31;

7 B. A license issued under chapter 33;

8 C. A license issued under chapter 35; or

9 D. A license issued under Title 17, chapter 62.

10 **6. Online sweepstakes game.** "Online sweepstakes game" means any game, contest or
11 promotion that:

12 A. Is available on the Internet and accessible on a mobile telephone, computer terminal
13 or similar access device;

14 B. Uses a dual-currency system of payment; and

15 C. Simulates casino-style gaming, including, but not limited to, slot machines, poker
16 and other table games, lottery games, bingo or sports wagering.

17 **7. Unit.** "Unit" means the Gambling Control Unit established as a bureau within the
18 Department of Public Safety under Title 25, section 2902, subsection 12.

19 **§1402. Online sweepstakes games prohibited; fines; other penalties**

20 A person that operates or promotes an online sweepstakes game or supports the
21 operation or promotion of an online sweepstakes game commits a civil violation.

22 **1. Fine.** A person that violates this section is subject to a fine of not less than \$10,000
23 and not more than \$100,000. All fines adjudged pursuant to this section must be collected
24 by the unit and distributed to the Gambling Addiction Prevention and Treatment Fund
25 established in Title 5, section 20006-B.

26 **2. Revocation of license.** If a licensee is convicted of unlawful gambling under Title
27 17-A, section 954, subsection 1-B or is otherwise found to be in violation of this section
28 through the administrative process applicable to the license held by the licensee, the unit
29 or board, whichever is responsible for administering the license, shall revoke the licensee's
30 license.

31 **3. Ineligible for license.** A person that is found to be in violation of this section is
32 ineligible to receive a license described in section 1401, subsection 5.

33 **Sec. 3. 17-A MRSA §954, sub-§1-B** is enacted to read:

34 **1-B.** A person is guilty of unlawful gambling if the person operates or promotes an
35 online sweepstakes game or supports the operation or promotion of an online sweepstakes
36 game. For the purposes of this subsection, "online sweepstakes game" has the same
37 meaning as in Title 8, section 1401, subsection 6.

SUMMARY

This bill clarifies that operating or promoting an online sweepstakes game constitutes "unlawful gambling" within the meaning of the Maine Criminal Code and establishes additional civil penalties related to that unlawful conduct.

The bill impacts online games or contests that use a dual-currency system of payment and that simulate casino-style gaming, including, but not limited to, slot machines, poker and other table games, lottery games, bingo or sports wagering. "Dual-currency system of payment" refers to the practice of using more than one system of coins or tokens to facilitate game play and is further defined in the bill.

The bill provides that a person that operates or promotes an online sweepstakes game is subject to a fine of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000. The bill requires that all fines collected be distributed to the Gambling Addiction Prevention and Treatment Fund.

Under the bill, if a person is found to operate or promote an online sweepstakes game and that person holds a license with the Gambling Control Unit or Gambling Control Board within the Department of Public Safety to operate certain gambling activities, the licensing entity must revoke that license. A person that violates the online sweepstakes games prohibition is also ineligible to receive one of the licenses specified by the bill.