



March 19, 2014

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Dear Licensee

We have received inquiries from bingo licensees concerning their organization hosting Texas Hold'em tournaments and other similar types of fundraisers.

All gambling in Missouri is illegal unless it fits under one of the exceptions in the Missouri Constitution. Two of those exceptions are under the jurisdiction and regulation of the Missouri Gaming Commission, those being approved gambling games conducted on riverboat casinos and bingo. Another exception found in Article III, Section 39F of the Missouri Constitution, does allow charitable and religious organizations recognized under federal law to sponsor raffles and sweepstakes. Licensed riverboat casinos are the only entities legally authorized to offer poker games, such as Texas Hold'em, in the state of Missouri.

Gambling has three elements: 1. Consideration, 2. Chance, and 3. Prize.

Consideration can be anything that a person is required to pay in order to participate in the activity and includes, but is not limited to, general entry fees, cover charges, reservation fees, dues, mandatory donations, or registration fees.

Missouri recognizes that games, even if they involve some level of skill, such as blackjack, poker, and Texas Hold'em, are games of chance.

Prize is anything of any value that may be awarded to any participant, including but not limited to ribbons, trophies, tokens, tickets, points, food, travel and vacation expenses, or money.

The Missouri Gaming Commission has regulatory responsibility and authority over bingo licensees. We note that some organizations may feel some frustration if they see other organizations who are not bingo licensees hosting Texas Hold'em tournaments, casino nights, or other types of promotions. For non-bingo licensees, those matters are issues for local law enforcement to determine whether they want to pursue criminal charges for those activities. In addition to the potential exposure for criminal charges, if a bingo licensee hosts a Texas Hold'em tournament, poker tournament, casino night, or any other type of fundraiser that would fit the definition of gambling, it also puts the bingo licensee at risk for disciplinary action, including revocation of their bingo license.

Sincerely,

Ed Grewach  
General Counsel  
Missouri Gaming Commission

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