



February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021

The Honorable John T. Yudichak  
Chair, Community, Economic and Recreational Development Committee

RE: Legislation to legalize online raffles of charities for the duration of the pandemic state of emergency.

Dear Chair Yudichak,

We, the undersigned organizations, representing the interests of hundreds of thousands of sportsmen and women throughout the Commonwealth, are writing to express our strong support for legalizing online raffles for nonprofits during the COVID-19 pandemic. Sen. Joe Pittman’s intention to reintroduce legislation (SB 1266) from last session would do just that and would provide much needed relief to nonprofits within the conservation community as well as other sectors of Pennsylvania’s society such as volunteer fire houses and police benevolent associations. Our organizations traditionally raise money through in-person events, but due to the pandemic we have collectively cancelled hundreds of events, stymieing our ability to fundraise. Online raffles would be the safest and most effective way to provide relief without burdening the taxpayers. We therefore urge you to support this legislation in Committee and consider joining the bill as a co-sponsor through the attached co-sponsorship memo from Sen. Pittman’s office.

The pandemic has had a serious financial impact on our organizations by taking away a primary means of fundraising. This creates a cascading effect on the state and limits our ability to provide financial and other support for a wide variety of on-the-ground conservation projects. Sportsmen’s and women’s organizations play a pivotal role for Pennsylvania’s landscape and communities by restoring wetlands and streams, managing forests, protecting hunting and fishing rights and teaching the next generation about America’s most cherished outdoor traditions. Through this important work, our organizations and members help facilitate a vast outdoor recreation economy in Pennsylvania, worth \$13.2 billion and support 171,000 jobs annually. According to the most recent data available, Pennsylvania’s 1.42 million hunters and anglers alone contributed \$1.5 billion to our state’s economy in 2011. Through the “user-pays, public benefits” American System of Conservation Funding the fees generated from hunting, fishing and trapping licenses provide critical conservation dollars on which state agencies rely - especially during these times of unprecedented outdoor recreation participation.

This proposed legislation would only amend the current Local Option Small Games of Chance Act, ensuring that all current state and federal laws will continue to be adhered to when conducting these raffles online. Though temporary, the legislation would also provide much needed relief to local

firehouses, churches, and service organizations, all of whom have been hit equally as hard by the pandemic. Our communities need these organizations now more than ever, and this legislation will ensure we can maintain collaborative efforts to make lasting impacts for fish, wildlife, habitats, and Pennsylvania citizens for years to come.

We ask you to support this fiscally responsible legislation in Committee and consider joining the bill as a co-sponsor to help provide much-needed relief to the nonprofits and community organizations of Pennsylvania. Please see the attached sponsorship memo from Sen. Pittman's office for more information.

Sincerely,

Ducks Unlimited  
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers  
Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen and Conservationists  
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation  
Trout Unlimited  
Delta Waterfowl  
National Deer Association  
PA Division of Izaak Walton  
Ruffed Grouse Society/American Woodcock Society  
National Wild Turkey Federation  
Pennsylvania Trappers Association  
United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania

ENC: Co-Sponsorship Memo from Sen. Pittman's Office

CC: The Honorable Jake Corman, President Pro Tempore, Pennsylvania Senate, and Ex Officio Member, Community, Economic, and Recreational Development Committee  
The Honorable Amanda Capelletti, Minority Chair, Community, Economic and Recreational Development Committee  
The Honorable David Argall, Vice Chair, Community, Economic and Recreational Development Committee  
The Honorable Lisa Boscola, Member, Community, Economic and Recreational Development Committee  
The Honorable Maria Collett, Member, Community, Economic and Recreational Development Committee  
The Honorable Wayne Fontana, Member, Community, Economic and Recreational Development Committee  
The Honorable Wayne Langerholc, Member, Community, Economic and Recreational Development Committee  
The Honorable Bob Mensch, Member, Community, Economic and Recreational Development Committee  
The Honorable Mike Regan, Member, Community, Economic and Recreational Development Committee  
The Honorable Devlin Robinson, Member, Community, Economic and Recreational Development Committee

The Honorable John Sabatina, Member, Community, Economic and Recreational Development  
Committee

The Honorable Tommy Tomlinson, Member, Community, Economic and Recreational  
Development Committee