

The Electronic Gaming Devices Control Act of 2024

Senator Christie New Craig Introduces Legislation to Clean up Illegal Gaming, Regulate All Electronic Gaming Devices, And Support Virginia's Honest Small Businesses

Richmond, Virginia Jun 16, 2024 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Senator Christie New Craig Introduces Legislation to Clean up Illegal Gaming, Regulate All Electronic Gaming Devices, And Support Virginia's Honest Small Businesses

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Recent Polling Indicates Virginians Strongly Support Limited Electronic Games In Small Businesses

Today, Senator Christie New Craig announced the introduction of a proposal to clean up illegal gaming, regulate and fully tax gaming devices, which will create a common-sense framework that will eliminate illegal gaming in Virginia, fund critical K-12 initiatives, and provide a much-needed revenue stream to thousands of small businesses in Virginia.

The draft of the bill (SB6007) follows the Governor's amendments and the approved House substitute to Delegate Hayes' HB 590, incorporating a significant number of the Governor's recommendations put forth both in his skill games work group (prior to reconvene) and by his proposed amendments to the original bill, as well as capturing the core concepts of the original Rouse/French Bill (SB 212) that passed both the House and the Senate during the 2024 regular General Assembly Session.

The Act accomplishes Four Major Goals:

1. New Criminal Laws and Enforcement Mechanisms to Clean up and Stop Illegal Electronic Gaming in Virginia

This bill provides easy to use and understand new criminal laws and enforcement mechanisms with immediate local and state funding to clean up illegal electronic gaming in Virginia once and for all. It establishes criminal laws that create stronger and clearer criminal enforcement provisions (as well as civil enforcement and significant fines) against individuals and corporations who violate the Act, which will eliminate illegal games and any criminal activity associated with the games. The bill creates an initial application, registration, and licensing process that makes it simple for law enforcement to differentiate between what is a legal or illegal electronic gaming device, thereby allowing efficient enforcement of the new gaming criminal laws by local Commonwealth Attorneys and police.

2. Permanent Statutory Public School K-12 Funding

The Craig bill creates a true permanent funding stream to state priorities, including Public Schools throughout the Commonwealth that will infuse our school divisions with hundreds of millions of dollars annually to ensure that each of Virginia's students in K-12 receive a high-quality public education, regardless of their zip code.

3. Provides Permanent Support and Funding for Thousands of Hardworking Virginia Small Business Owners and Employees

The bill also provides an immediate and permanent lifeline to those existing struggling and law-abiding small Virginia businesses while Lottery implements permanent, strict regulatory requirements in the

electronic gaming marketplace, and creates instant funding and an enforcement mechanism for Virginia's state and local law enforcement to easily identify illegal electronic games which will eliminate all other illegal electronic gaming devices currently proliferating in Virginia.

4. Robust Monitoring and Strict Compliance Lottery-Based Regulatory System

Senator Craig's proposal provides a robust regulatory system, as proposed by the House and the Governor's office, developed by the trusted Virginia Lottery to create a useable and permanent regulatory taxation/enforcement/monitoring system, with strict youth prohibitions and problem gaming funding to protect all Virginians. It defines electronic games, identifies and defines the regulated premises that are permitted to offer/operate electronic games to the general public in Virginia, and limits the maximum number of games permitted to operate in each location (no more than 3 electronic gaming machines in Lottery/ABC regulated "non-truckstop" locations, and no more than 7 electronic gaming machines in "truck stop" locations as defined in the code). This proposal has the potential to generate hundreds of millions of dollars annually that will fund important state projects without raising taxes on Virginia citizens.

Quotes:

"As an elected official, supporting small businesses is one of my top priorities," said Senator New Craig. "Many businesses, particularly in the retail and hospitality sectors, have and continue to struggle. First, it was the COVID-19 pandemic, and today, the higher price of goods and labor. Before the skill game ban took effect in November, the revenue from skill gaming provided supplemental revenue that helped them to navigate these difficult economic challenges. This proposal has support, as recent polling suggests that Virginians strongly support legitimate electronic gaming in our small businesses. Our small businesses need our support, and we have an opportunity to resolve this issue with the legislature coming back into session. But more importantly," Senator Craig continued, "it sets in place a permanent regulatory framework for legal electronic gaming that will eliminate the illegal gaming industry that has proliferated in Virginia as a result of the skill game ban last year."

A recent poll conducted by Coefficient, commissioned by the Virginia Merchants and Amusement Coalition (VA MAC), reveals strong public support for electronic gaming devices, and their role in supporting small businesses. The poll shows that 54% of Virginians are in favor of electronic gaming, compared to just 26% who oppose it, a significant margin of 28%. Additionally, most Virginians polled (46% support/16% oppose) support the hundreds of millions of dollars in additional tax revenue the games would generate to help the Commonwealth address pressing needs.

Sen. Craig concluded: "This bill creates a much-needed supplemental revenue source for Virginia small businesses while implementing nearly all the strong regulatory and public protections the Governor recommended. I believe this is the right plan, and the time is now to help small businesses and resolve an issue the majority of Virginians support. I look forward to continuing to work with our Governor and my colleagues to pass legislation to support Virginia small businesses by taxing and regulating electronic gaming in our Commonwealth."

<https://christienewcraig.com/legislation>

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