

HB 737-LOCAL - AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE

20Mar2025... 0850h

2025 SESSION

25-0742

02/11

HOUSE BILL

737-LOCAL

AN ACT creating local options for games of chance.

SPONSORS: Rep. B. Boyd, Hills. 12; Rep. Barton, Graf. 1; Rep. D. Paige, Carr. 1; Rep. Schamberg, Merr. 6; Rep. Spilsbury, Sull. 3; Rep. Stringham, Graf. 3; Rep. Turcotte, Straf. 4; Sen. Rochefort, Dist 1

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means

ANALYSIS

This bill gives municipalities a local option to vote to prohibit the operation of games of chance within their boundaries.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struckthrough.]~~
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty Five

AN ACT creating local options for games of chance.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 1 New Section; Local Option; Games of Chance. Amend RSA 287-D by inserting after section
2 287-D:31 the following new section:

3 287-D:32 Local Option; Games of Chance.

4 I. The lottery commission shall not grant a game operator employer license to operate games
5 of chance in a municipality if that municipality has voted to prohibit games of chance to be held
6 within its boundaries, or if there is a pending question on the municipality’s warrant or official ballot
7 for the next regular municipal election. Such vote shall be held in the following manner:

8 (a) In a town, the question shall be placed on the warrant of an annual town meeting
9 upon receipt of a petition signed by at least 25 registered voters. If a city, the question shall be
10 placed on the official ballot for the next regular municipal election upon submission to the city clerk
11 of a petition signed by at least 5 percent of registered voters.

12 (b) The selectmen, aldermen, or city council shall hold a public hearing on the question
13 at least 15 days, but not more than 30 days before the question is to be voted on. Notice of the
14 hearing shall be posted in at least 2 public places in the municipality, on the website of the
15 municipality, and by publication in a newspaper of general circulation at least 14 days before the
16 hearing.

17 (c) In municipalities where games of chance are not currently in operation, the wording
18 of the question shall be substantially as follows: "Shall we prohibit the operation of games of chance
19 within the town or city?"

20 (d) In municipalities where games of chance are currently operating, the wording of the
21 question shall be substantially as follows: "Shall we prohibit additional brick and mortar games of
22 chance operations within the town or city?"

23 II. If a majority of those voting on the question vote "Yes," new games of chance may not be
24 operated within the town or city.

25 III. If the question is not approved, the question may later be voted upon according to the
26 provisions of paragraph I as early as the next annual town meeting or regular municipal election.

27 IV. A city or town may rescind its disapproval for operation of games of chance under RSA
28 287-D by following procedures in paragraph I in this section.

29 V. An unincorporated place may disallow the operation of games of chance by majority vote
30 of the county delegation, after a public hearing is held, and may be rescinded in a similar fashion.

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1 VI. The lottery commission shall maintain a list of municipalities where games of chance
2 have been prohibited pursuant to this section.

3 VII. If the town, city, or unincorporated place has voted within this section to prohibit games
4 of chance, that municipality may pass an ordinance allowing only a specified number of charitable
5 gaming events per year, or certain number of dates per year to be determined by the town, hosted by
6 local charitable organizations pursuant to RSA 287-D:4, and specifying how the municipality shall
7 determine how charitable organizations register for a gaming event.

8 VIII. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, including paragraphs I and II, any vote by
9 a municipality to prohibit games of chance within its boundaries shall not apply to any games of
10 chance operator licensed by the lottery commission, or any applicant who has applied for a games of
11 chance operator license prior to the date of the petition in subparagraph I(a) or the notice date in
12 subparagraph I(b), except that any operator who ceases operation for a period exceeding 4 years, or
13 an applicant who fails to commence operation within 6 years of application approval, shall be subject
14 to any intervening vote by the municipality.

15 2 Effective Date. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.