

DAVE MURPHY

State Representative • 56th Assembly District

Assembly Committee on State Affairs
July 10, 2019

AB 37/SB 43

Mr. Chair, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to express my strong support for Assembly Bill 37, our Paddlewheel Raffles bill.

Wisconsin has many charitable organizations that support excellent causes while fostering community participation and good works. Most of us volunteer in these activities to help our communities. I am a long-time member of my local Lion's Club, for example, and I also volunteer at my church. This bill will help groups like the Lion's Club continue their generous and altruistic work without accidentally committing a crime.

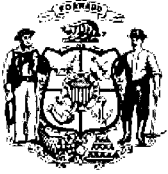
Right now in our state, unless a game of chance with a prize is permitted in Wisconsin law, it is considered illegal gambling and is a felony. For example, last session the legislature passed a law to allow those plastic or rubber duck races at certain events where there is a drawing for a prize. If that type of game hadn't been made legal, charitable organizations holding a Class B raffle license could have faced a Class I Felony charge.

This bill allows another form of fundraising fun to be permitted: the paddlewheel raffle. The raffle still has requirements, and the organization must have a Class B raffle license. As long as the rules are followed, this type of raffle can be allowed.

This bill passed 9-0 out of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Revenue and Financial Institutions in May, and it passed the entire Senate in June.

Again, thank you for hearing this bill. I hope you'll join me in supporting this common sense legislation, Assembly Bill 37.

Thank you.



ANDRÉ JACQUE

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*Testimony before the Assembly Committee on State Affairs
State Senator André Jacque
July 10th, 2019*

Chairman Swearingen and Members of the Assembly Committee on State Affairs,

Thank you for holding this hearing and the opportunity to testify before you today in support of Assembly Bill 37 and Senate Bill 43. This common sense legislation will allow the popular use of paddlewheels for raffles across our state to continue without groups unknowingly and unintentionally committing a felony level offense.

Paddlewheel raffles are very popular amongst Wisconsin's many sportsmen's clubs, civic and veterans' organizations, and churches throughout the state. For example a frequently used variation is the "meat raffle," a crowd favorite seen at events from church festivals to VFW fish fries. However, groups who hold paddlewheel raffles at special events under their raffle license are being informed that they are fostering illegal gambling, and are subject to up to a Class I Felony penalty.

Thanks to previous legislation we've successfully passed to end the use of a similar loophole in state law to obstruct Wisconsin charitable organizations, a Class B raffle license may now be used to conduct a "multiple-container raffle." This allows for popular raffles such as plastic and rubber duck races at special events to lawfully be carried out as long as the winner in the raffle or race is determined by a "drawing" with all tickets having an "equal opportunity to win."

We have introduced AB 37 and SB 43 to provide similar relief for paddlewheel raffles by allowing an organization with a Class B raffle license to conduct such raffles without inadvertently committing a Class I Felony. Minnesota, where such games are also popular, has already legalized paddlewheel raffles for charitable groups.

I am happy to share that this legislation passed the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Revenue and Financial Institutions with a unanimous bipartisan 9-0 vote and passed the full Senate on a voice vote. We ask that you join your colleagues in supporting this common sense fix to ensure popular meat raffles and other paddlewheel raffles at small festivals can continue to thrive. Thank you for your consideration of Assembly Bill 37 and Senate Bill 43.



Jeff Mursau

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 36TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Assembly Committee on State Affairs
AB 37- Paddlewheel Raffles
July 10, 2019

Chairman Swearingen and Committee Members -

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Assembly Bill 37, related to paddlewheel raffles.

Last fall I was contacted by a number of constituents who notified me that the non-profit group they belong to was being targeted by auditors of the Department of Administration for illegal gambling. These groups included: Lake Associations, ATV Associations, and other civic organizations. They were told that the charitable fundraising they were doing was unlawful, that they were now on the WI Gaming Commission's radar, and future violations could be prosecuted with a felony resulting in a minimum sentence of a \$1000 fine and possible jail time.

In most instances, these groups were using paddlewheels to raise money for their groups cause. The paddlewheel is a crowd favorite and has been more effective in raising money than other types of raffles. These local groups don't collect a significant amount of money from these raffles, but it's enough to help keep their cause moving forward. In Forest County, a number of the lake associations use these raffles to raise money to fight invasive species in the lakes that are enjoyed by people from all across the state.

The Senate Companion Bill (SB 43) has already gone through the senate with a unanimous vote in committee and a voice vote on the senate floor. I am hopeful that we will see strong support in the Assembly as well and can get this to the Governor's desk. These groups are relying on us to get this done so that they can proceed with their necessary fundraising efforts without fear of prosecution.

Once again, thank you for holding a public hearing on this important piece of legislation. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.