



People sign in to enter and some to speak at the crowded Michigan Gaming Control Board hearing Friday at the Michigan Historical Library and Museum in Lansing about proposed changes to charity gaming rules. ROD SANFORD/LANSING STATE JOURNAL

# Hundreds speak out on charity gaming changes

Proposed rules would strictly regulate practice

By Kathleen Gray  
Gannett Michigan

Hundreds of people crammed into a Lansing auditorium Friday morning to vent about proposed rules that would strictly regulate charity gaming, which has grown into a multimillion-dollar business in the last decade.

"We never contemplated the explosion of millionaire party gaming," said Don McGee, a lawyer with the Michigan Attorney General's office. "We're not unmindful that you're raising money for charities for good causes. But these poker halls are highly susceptible to fraud and corruption. If you're not constantly regulating them, like we are in the casinos, things



Michigan Gaming Control Board Executive Director Richard Kalm speaks to a packed room Friday about proposed changes to charity gaming rules.

are going to happen."

The rules, said Rick Kalm, executive director of the Michigan Gaming Control Board, are meant to crack down on illegal gambling operations. The state already has closed down

16 gaming locations for illegal gambling and other criminal behavior.

"We are not going to tolerate illegal gambling. And in locations where it happens over and over again, we will not issue

licenses," he said. "But we fully embrace licensed charities and they'll continue to be able to conduct up to 16 events a year."

But the charities said the proposed rules will kill a valuable source of fundraising for many organizations.

"The entire body of rules that are proposed are preposterous and extremely punitive and would destroy charity gaming," said Judy White, of the Marine City Music Festival Inc., which holds charity gaming events in Algonac.

The gaming board will take the comments, develop a final set of rules in the next two weeks and submit them to a joint rules committee of the Legislature.

The committee is limited in what it can do, and the new rules will automatically go into effect at some point during the first

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