

 Rhode Island Department of Revenue
Lottery Division

March 18, 2026

The Honorable John P. Burke, Chair
Senate Committee on Labor and Gaming
State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: 2026 S 2742 – An Act Relating to Criminal Offenses – Non-Charitable Bingo

Dear Chair Burke:

I am writing on behalf of the Rhode Island Lottery to express concern with the above-captioned legislation, which seeks to create a new chapter to authorize the offering of non-charitable bingo at the host facilities (“the Act”).

The Rhode Island Lottery already possesses the constitutional and statutory authority to operate Bingo at the Lincoln and/or Tiverton gaming facilities and is prepared to work with its existing vendors to discuss a path for achieving this goal. Accordingly, additional statutory authorization is not necessary and, depending on its form, may contravene such a goal. As such, the Rhode Island Lottery has several concerns with the proposed legislation as drafted.

The Act is likely unconstitutional because it appears to delegate operational authority of a lottery game to a non-state entity. Section 15 of Article VI of the Rhode Island Constitution requires the State to operate all lotteries, including the game of Bingo. While there are certain exceptions related to Bingo for charitable gaming purposes, the conduct at issue in this bill is prohibited by the Rhode Island Constitution unless it is operated by the Rhode Island Lottery. The legislation as drafted positions the Rhode Island Lottery not as the operator of this particular lottery offering, but, instead, simply as a regulator. To the extent the legislation only requires oversight and licensing while permitting a “non-charitable bingo operator” other than the Rhode Island Lottery to operate and conduct this game, it is unconstitutional.

Moreover, this legislation may create a conflict with the Rhode Island Lottery’s master contract with Brightstar Global Solutions Corporation, formerly IGT Global Solutions Corporation, (“Brightstar”). Pursuant to the Marc A. Crisafulli Economic Development Act, P.L. 2021, ch. 41, § 3 and P.L. 2021, ch. 42, § 3, Brightstar paid \$27 million dollars to the State for the right to be the exclusive provider of traditional lottery products including, *inter alia*, online lottery systems and related equipment as well as the processing of online and video lottery transactions. Brightstar currently provides the system, related equipment, and processing for transactions related to the Bingo game offered and operated by the Rhode Island Lottery (as discussed in greater detail below). To the extent this legislation impairs the contractual rights between the



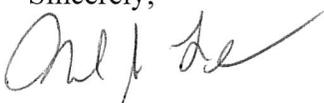
Rhode Island Lottery and Brightstar, it appears to violate the Contract Clause provisions of both the Rhode Island Constitution as well as the US Constitution.

Further, the Rhode Island Lottery has operational concerns with the Act because it appears to curtail the Rhode Island Lottery's current Bingo operations. By way of background, the Rhode Island Lottery has offered Bingo as a monitor game since 2012. Players can watch an animated drawing and then match the numbers to their Bingo board to create certain winning patterns. The Bingo game is sold by all 1,081 Lottery Retailers throughout the State, and there are approximately 252 Lottery Retailers who have monitors that display Bingo drawings at their locations. Players can also rewatch these Bingo drawings on the Rhode Island Lottery's website and mobile app. However, the Act appears to limit Bingo to only the two casino gaming facilities. If such restrictions were enacted, it would constrain the Lottery's ability to provide Bingo offered currently to our players, negatively impacting revenue received from this lottery product and creating dissatisfaction with our customers. Additionally, such restrictions would also negatively impact sales commissions available to the 1,081 Lottery Retailers who can offer Bingo. Notably, the Lincoln and Tiverton gaming facilities are both active Lottery Retailers (in addition to their roles as state-operated casinos) and could offer the current Bingo game in the same manner as other Lottery Retailers.

To summarize, Bingo is a lottery game that the Rhode Island Lottery is already permitted to offer throughout the State and currently does. Further, the Rhode Island Lottery Director is statutorily empowered to supervise lottery games, including, but not limited to, the manner for selecting winning shares, the frequency of drawings, the locations where shares can be sold, the method used for selling shares, and the compensation paid to Lottery Retailers. *See* R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-61-4. The Director is likewise empowered to implement lottery-related initiatives and is able to enter into contracts pertaining to the operation of lotteries. *See id.* Accordingly, to the extent the Lincoln and Tiverton gaming facilities are desirous of offering a certain version of the Bingo game, the Rhode Island Lottery is willing to engage in those discussions.

Based on the foregoing, the Rhode Island Lottery respectfully urges you not to pass the Act and stands ready to answer any questions you may have with respect to the concerns laid out above.

Sincerely,



Mark A. Furcolo
Director

cc: The Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Gaming
Kristen Silvia, Deputy Chief of Staff/Director of Legislation
Steven Hayes, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel to the President
Jane E. Cole, Interim Director, Department of Revenue