

To: Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
From: Steven Antonio
Simsbury
Antonio's Restaurant / Hoops N' Hops Sports Bar
Re: Please support HB 7054, An Act Concerning Keno
Date: 4/9/2015

I am writing in regards to House Bill 7054 regarding Keno in our state. In a state that has become "unbusiness-friendly" to an unprecedented regard, it is refreshing that the legislature is again considering leveling a playing field with our neighboring states.

My locally operated restaurant and sports bar business is only 12 miles from the Massachusetts border. All surrounding states are competitors for our business because it takes less than an hour to drive to another state from anywhere in CT. This fact matters.

These neighboring states are more consumer attractive as a result of several major factors. Including, but not limited to; a more wholesaler to retailer- friendly alcohol distribution system, and lack of channel pricing. They don't charge sales tax on off premise alcoholic beverages. The much less costly labor pool, and last but not least, the offering of activities such as Keno in their establishments.

The last time Keno was discussed, we were so excited that we made capital improvements just to be a ready participant. We, as well as other bars, went to the expense of rewiring designated electrical outlets, installation of additional monitors, taking and passing the CT Lottery's training course and even paying for the expense of installing a lottery terminal and scratch tickets.

Neither the lottery nor scratch tickets proved to be an economically viable entertainment in our sports bar atmosphere, and in what has become typical Connecticut Legislature fashion, the Keno game concept that would have helped our local businesses so much, was not important enough to be pursued.

On a more optimistic note, I am glad to again see this concept proposed. Please save our businesses while we can. Each dollar spent in an out of town establishment is not only a dollar I do not get, but also 6.35% your budget does not get.

Please level the playing field.

Please help!

Sincerely,
Steven Antonio
Owner
Antonio's Restaurant / Hoops N' Hops Sports Bar