



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ACT MEMO

2005 Wisconsin Act 247
[2005 Senate Bill 597]

**Charitable Bingo; Progressive
Jackpot Bingo**

2005 Wisconsin Act 247 makes changes to the statutes governing charitable bingo and creates statutory provisions governing “progressive jackpot bingo.”

Background Information

The statutes allow a bona fide religious, charitable, service, fraternal or veterans organization, and a nonstate organization to which contributions are deductible for federal income tax purposes, to apply to the Department of Administration (DOA) for a license to conduct bingo. DOA currently offers a regular bingo license and a license for “limited period bingo” (conducted for a period of not more than four out of five consecutive days in any one year at a special function). With a regular bingo license, an organization may conduct “regular” bingo games (played on reusable hard cards) or “special” bingo games (played on disposable paper cards that allow play at a “bingo occasion,” a single session at which a series of successive bingo games is played).

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The Act creates statutory provisions governing “progressive jackpot bingo,” defined in the Act as “a series of bingo games in which the prize is carried over to the succeeding game if no player wins a game within a specified number of calls.” The Act makes progressive jackpot bingo an exception from the statutory prohibition against prizes being determined on the basis of a specified number of calls; from the statutory requirement that each bingo winner be determined and every prize be awarded and delivered on the same day on which the bingo occasion is conducted; and from the requirement that the amount of the prize for each bingo game be clearly described, announced to players before each game, and posted where the bingo cards are distributed (for progressive jackpot bingo, the *method* for determining the amount of the prize must be described, announced, and posted). The Act prohibits a service organization that is a community-based residential facility, a senior citizen community center, or an adult family home from playing progressive jackpot bingo.

This memo provides a brief description of the Act. For more detailed information, consult the text of the law and related legislative documents at the Legislature’s Web site at: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/>.

Under the Act, a player wins progressive jackpot bingo by covering all the numbers on his or her bingo card within a specified number of calls. The number of calls for the first game must be at least 48, and the number must increase by one in each succeeding game until a player wins the progressive jackpot bingo prize. Once started, progressive jackpot bingo must be played at each succeeding bingo occasion until the progressive jackpot is awarded, except that progressive jackpot bingo may be played only once per day.

The starting prize for progressive jackpot bingo must be either 50% of the card sales for the first progressive jackpot bingo game, or an amount not to exceed \$500 that is specified before the start of play. The prize for each succeeding game must be 50% of the card sales for the game plus the prize amount from the preceding game. If no person wins a progressive jackpot bingo game after the specified number of calls is completed, the game continues until a player covers all of the numbers on his or her card; that person must be awarded a consolation prize of not less than \$100, which may not be paid from the 50% of card sales used to fund the progressive jackpot bingo prize. Progressive jackpot bingo must then be played at each succeeding bingo occasion until the progressive jackpot is awarded to a player covering all the numbers on his or her bingo card within the specified number of calls, except that progressive jackpot bingo may be played only once per day.

Prior law provided that no prize in a single bingo game could exceed \$250, and the aggregate value of prizes at any bingo occasion could generally not exceed \$1,000. *The Act* increases the allowable maximum prize for a single bingo game to \$500 and the generally allowable maximum prize for a bingo occasion to \$2,500. The Act provides that these prize limits do not apply to progressive jackpot bingo.

The Act increases the fee that may be charged for a single card to participate in limited period bingo from \$.50 to \$1 per game, and the fee that may be charged for each special bingo card from \$.25 to \$1.

The Act repeals the statutory prohibition against playing more than three special bingo games at each bingo occasion, and also repeals the statutory requirement that a person must pay for a regular bingo card to participate as a player in a regular or special bingo game.

Effective Date: The Act takes effect on April 13, 2006.

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