

HARRY HUGHES, Governor

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In accordance with Article II, Section 17 of the Maryland Constitution, I have today vetoed Senate Bill 218, legislation that would authorize limited slot machine gambling in eight Eastern Shore counties.

Senate Bill 218, is almost identical to Senate Bill 774 which I vetoed after the 1985 regular session of the General Assembly. It would authorize certain nonprofit organizations in eight Eastern Shore counties to own and operate slot machines under local regulation and on condition that 50 percent of the proceeds go to charity.

I am opposed to this bill for policy, legal, and philosophical reasons. Therefore, and for the same reasons stated in my veto message on Senate Bill 774 of the 1985 Session, a copy of which is attached, I have decided to veto Senate Bill 218.

Sincerely,
Harry Hughes
Governor

May 28, 1985

The Honorable Melvin A. Steinberg
President of the Senate
State House
Annapolis, Maryland 21404

Dear Mr. President:

In accordance with Article II, Section 17 of the Maryland Constitution, I have today vetoed Senate Bill 774, legislation that would have authorized limited slot machine gambling in eight Eastern Shore counties. After extensive consideration, I am convinced that neither the approach nor the goal of this legislation represent sound public policy. It establishes an unwise precedent and may lead to a serious eroding of the statewide prohibition against the possession and operation of slot machines.

Specifically, Senate Bill 774 authorizes a "bona fide fraternal, religious, or war veterans' non profit organization" located in any of eight Eastern Shore counties (excepting Worcester County) that has been in existence for a period of five years, to possess and operate not more than five slot machines. The bill provides for local licensing and requires that at least 50% of the proceeds from the slot machines be turned over to charity with the remainder used in furtherance of the purposes of the organization. It also sets forth certain reporting requirements to the Comptroller of the Treasury. Enforcement, except with regard to the matters related to reporting, presumably would be a local responsibility. The bill makes no provision to exclude minors from participation nor does it in any way limit participation to members of the eligible organization