

Client Alert

Internet Gaming Legislation in Michigan

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Section 137 of Chapter 219 of the Acts of 2016 created a special commission to investigate, study, and make recommendations on the issue of online gaming and daily fantasy sports (the “Special Commission”). The nine member Special Commission convened for the first time on October 31, 2016, and held six meetings where they heard testimony from the public and industry experts. Witnesses read from prepared testimony and answered questions from the commission members.

This language follows that of Senate Bill 203 (“SB 203”), which was introduced by Senator Kowall, the Senate Majority Floor Leader for the Michigan Senate, that would only allow online skill games to be operated by licensed casinos and tribes in Michigan.

These bills raise serious concerns to skill gaming operators. Each broadly defines an “internet game” to mean “a game of skill or chance that is offered for play through the internet in which a person wagers money or something of monetary value for the opportunity to win money or something of monetary value.” Given the broad definition of “internet game,” and the fact that only Michigan gaming licensees can offer such games, these bills would limit the offering of existing online contests of skill to only licensed casinos and tribes.

If this legislation is of concern and you would like to explore the retention of lobbying representation, either alone or in collaboration with other operators in the skill-gaming space, please contact us: Tony Cabot at ACabot@lrrc.com or Karl Rutledge at KRutledge@lrrc.com.

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Tony Cabot is a partner in the in the firm’s Las Vegas office. Covering the entire gaming spectrum, Tony’s clients include casino owners, game manufacturers, developers, Internet gambling sites, and companies that run contests and sweepstakes. Tony provides legal counseling related to all types of games, encompassing online games, casual games and complex skill-based games.