



City of Dodge City

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**Testimony to the
House Committee on Federal and State Affairs
House Bill No. 2545
Cherise Tieben, City Manager
City of Dodge City, Kansas
February 13, 2018**

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Committee on Federal and State Affairs, my name is **Cherise Tieben, City Manager of the City of Dodge City, Kansas**. Due to previous obligations, I am unable to appear in person, but wish to submit written testimony as an opponent to House Bill No. 2545.

When the frontier was still open, gambling helped draw cowboys and other visitors to Dodge City. Because of our rich history and the tourism draw of Boot Hill Museum, Dodge City seemed to be a natural site for a casino. For many years' community leaders pushed for legislation designating Dodge City as one of the state gaming zones. Ultimately, in 2007, that goal was achieved, when Dodge City was named as one of the four authorized state gaming zones.

Boot Hill Casino opened in December, 2009 and was the first state-owned and operated casino in Kansas. Since its opening, the casino has helped attract thousands and thousands of visitors, many of whom are from out-of-state including Texas, Oklahoma and Colorado. While in Dodge City many casino patrons visit the historical sites, shop, eat and stay in lodging. The increased economic activity spurred by the casino has been a financial boost to many local businesses.

Boot Hill Casino made a substantial financial commitment, spending in excess of \$75 million on the approximately 65,000-square foot casino complex. Additionally, the City of Dodge City also built and opened a \$50 million 84,000-square-foot events center/conference space adjacent to the casino. The-city owned arena has seating for 5,000. The event and conference center has accommodated sporting events, concerts, conferences of all sizes and many other events.

Our city leaders planned, made long term decisions and based financial feasibility of the events center based in-part on the agreement between the state and the gaming facility manager. Though I do not speak for the gaming facility manager, it is reasonable to assume they too made business decisions based on the rules of the game when their management contract was approved. Between the events center and casino, over \$100 million has been invested. Simply put, we based our investment decisions with the full expectation the state would not, mid-stream, change the rules of the game and that the state would honor its' end of the agreement. Where I live, a deal is still a deal. You honor your commitments.

The State has established casinos in 3 of the 4 gaming zones that are generating substantial revenues for the State and the local communities. Dodge City receives needed revenues from Boot Hill Casino which contributes to the health, welfare and quality of life of our citizens. My information is that reopening racing tracks within the State could result in a 25% decline in gross revenues for the casinos. This would be detrimental to Dodge City and the other local communities that rely on the revenues for governmental support.

The State should continue to focus its efforts on the continued success of Boot Hill Casino. Dodge City relies significantly on its success. Allowing electronic gaming machines at racetracks will likely have far reaching consequences that will touch the daily lives of our citizens through the potential loss of jobs, businesses which rely on the vitality of Boot Hill Casino and governmental services for our citizens. The State must be diligent to preserve this stream of revenue for the State and Dodge City. For these reasons, I urge this Committee to vote no on HB 2545.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony.