

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

February 28, 2003 LR 11

the Legislature may authorize and regulate casino-style gambling. Now what is a casino? You may recall the other bill didn't refer to casinos. It referred to Class III gaming, which is explicitly defined under federal law. But what is a casino? You know, if you look at the dictionary definitions, it starts out being a pleasure house or summer home in Italy, goes to a public room used for social meetings, gets down to probably the meaning that's intended, a building for gambling often with other amenities. Now, we have in current law in the constitution specific provisions related to bingo, for example. Is a bingo hall a casino? It's a place for gambling. It has other amenities. We're not distinguishing between Class III gaming and bingo halls. Now, that starts to cause you problems because there is a specific provision in here about bingo games, and the fact that they're conducted by nonprofit associations. Well, if a bingo hall is a casino and casino-style, whatever "style" means, we will get to that in a minute, is allowed, does that mean now that this law takes precedent over the bingo law in another part of the constitution here? The word casino has no definition. It could be a bingo hall. How about the Catholic church hall where the raffles are held? Only nonprofits, only nonprofits can conduct charitable gaming. But that's an establishment for gambling. Or does it mean primarily for gambling?

PRESIDENT HEINEMAN: One minute.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Well, it's also an establishment for gambling if you're holding your charitable gaming there. Does that mean that the Legislature would now be authorized to allow profits to do noncharitable...to do raffles and lotteries, even though in the other part of the constitution it says that charitable gaming is for nonprofits only? First major big problem, casino is not defined, and by any dictionary definition could mean a bingo hall, could mean a charitable gaming hall, could mean whatever you want it to mean as long as some gambling goes on in that building. That's big major problem, number one.

PRESIDENT HEINEMAN: Thank you, Senator Beutler. The Chair recognizes Senator Janssen.