



House Bill 970

Senior Citizen Activities Centers – Bingo Games – Authorization

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
with AMENDMENTS

To: Ways & Means Committee

Date: March 1, 2019

From: Natasha Mehu

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS HB 970 WITH AMENDMENTS**. Counties seek to strike a reasonable balance between granting rights to hold bingo games and the local responsibility to oversee the games.

HB 970 would authorize individuals to conduct bingo games at senior citizen activities centers. It sets parameters for how these games may be operated and how prizes may be calculated and awarded. While this is a well-intentioned means of expanding recreational activities, it places additional unintentional burdens on local governments.

County governments operate and oversee senior citizen activities centers. As drafted, the bill would not allow counties to have any say in whether an individual holds bingo games at a senior activities center. Since counties have a responsibility to manage their senior citizen activities centers, they would be obligated to monitor and manage these games even if they didn't have the resources or desire to do so. A broad spectrum of services are organized and offered at these centers and counties need to have the flexibility to provide and monitor programs at these centers in the best interest of their communities.

MACo offers amendments to ensure the goal of allowing individuals to conduct bingo games is balanced by the ability of counties to decide whether to operate the games. Changing the authorization for these games to occur at residential senior centers instead of senior citizen activities centers would allow these games to occur in private facilities without requiring counties to oversee games at their senior centers. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS HB 907 WITH AMENDMENTS**.

Amendment

On page 2:

Strike lines 2-3 in their entirety.

In line 8 strike "SENIOR CITIZEN ACTIVITIES CENTER" and insert "**RESIDENTIAL SENIOR CENTER.**"