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## CRIMES AND OFFENSES Offenses Against Public Health and Morals: Change Bingo Licensure Qualifications

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## CRIMES AND OFFENSES

### *Offenses Against Public Health and Morals: Change Bingo Licensure Qualifications*

CODE SECTION:	O.C.G.A. § 16-12-53 (amended)
BILL NUMBER:	HB 155
ACT NUMBER:	318
GEORGIA LAWS:	2001 Ga. Laws 1036
SUMMARY:	The Act reduces the amount of time that a nonprofit tax-exempt organization must be in existence to qualify for a bingo license.
EFFECTIVE DATE:	July 1, 2000

#### *History*

Georgia law previously required nonprofit tax-exempt organizations to wait a period of twenty-four months before applying for a license to operate bingo games.<sup>1</sup> Several American Legion posts requested that the Georgia Assembly reduce this time requirement from twenty-four months to twelve months.<sup>2</sup>

#### *HB 155*

Representative Thomas B. Buck of the 135th District sponsored HB 155 and introduced the bill on the House floor on January 12, 2001.<sup>3</sup> The House assigned the bill to its Industry Committee, which favorably reported the bill without changes on February 7, 2001.<sup>4</sup> The House adopted and passed HB 155, as introduced, by a vote of 151 to 1 on February 12, 2001.<sup>5</sup>

On February 13, 2001, the bill was read in the Senate and referred to the Senate Committee on Finances and Public Utilities.<sup>6</sup> Senator Ed

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1. See 1985 Ga. Laws 149, § 16, at 158 (formerly found at O.C.G.A. § 16-12-53 (1999)).
  2. See Audio Recording of House Proceedings, Feb. 12, 2001 (remarks by Rep. Thomas B. Buck), at <http://www.ganet.org/services/leg/audio/2001archive.html> [hereinafter House Audio].
  3. See HB 155, as introduced, 2001 Ga. Gen. Assem.; State of Georgia Final Composite Status Sheet, HB 155, Mar. 21, 2001.
  4. See State of Georgia Final Composite Status Sheet, HB 155, Mar. 21, 2001.
  5. See Georgia House of Representatives Voting Record, HB 155 (Feb. 12, 2001), at [http://www.legis.state.ga.us/Legis/2001\\_02/votes/hv0097.htm](http://www.legis.state.ga.us/Legis/2001_02/votes/hv0097.htm).
  6. See State of Georgia Final Composite Status Sheet, HB 155, Mar. 21, 2001.

Harbison from the 15th District, speaking on behalf of the Committee, favorably reported the bill without changes on March 12, 2001.<sup>7</sup> The Senate adopted and passed the bill with no further changes on March 19, 2001, by a vote of 45 to 7.<sup>8</sup> The General Assembly then forwarded the bill to Governor Roy Barnes, who signed the bill into law on April 27, 2001.<sup>9</sup>

### *The Act*

The Act amends Georgia Code section 16-12-53 regarding the bingo licensure of certain nonprofit tax-exempt organizations.<sup>10</sup> The Act reduces the amount of time that such organizations must be in existence before they are eligible to submit a bingo gaming license application.<sup>11</sup> Thus, nonprofit tax-exempt organizations, such as the American Legion, the Elks Lodge, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, will be able to apply for a bingo license twelve months after the organization first comes into existence, instead of waiting twenty-four months.<sup>12</sup> However, the Act does not alter or change any of the remaining application criteria or licensure requirements.<sup>13</sup>

*Kimberly A. Childs*

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7. See Audio Recording of Senate Proceedings, Mar. 19, 2001 (remarks by Sen. Ed Harbison), at <http://www.ganet.org/services/leg/audio/2001archive.html>.

8. See Georgia Senate Voting Record, HB 155 (Mar. 19, 2001), at [http://www.legis.state.ga.us/Legis/2001\\_02/votes/sv0412.htm](http://www.legis.state.ga.us/Legis/2001_02/votes/sv0412.htm).

9. See 2001 Ga. Laws 1036, § 2, at 1037.

10. Compare 1985 Ga. Laws 149, § 16, at 158 (formerly found at O.C.G.A. § 16-12-53 (1999)), with O.C.G.A. § 16-12-53 (Supp. 2001).

11. Compare 1985 Ga. Laws 149, § 16, at 158 (formerly found at O.C.G.A. § 16-12-53 (1999)), with O.C.G.A. § 16-12-53 (Supp. 2001). See Telephone Interview with Rep. Newt Hudson, House District No. 156 (Apr. 3, 2001) [hereinafter Hudson Interview].

12. Compare 1985 Ga. Laws 149, § 16, at 158 (formerly found at O.C.G.A. § 16-12-53 (1999)), with O.C.G.A. § 16-12-53 (Supp. 2001). See Hudson Interview, *supra* note 11.

13. Compare 1985 Ga. Laws 149, § 16, at 158 (formerly found at O.C.G.A. § 16-12-53 (1999)), with O.C.G.A. § 16-12-53 (Supp. 2001). See House Audio, *supra* note 2 (remarks by Rep. Thomas B. Buck).