

ORDINANCE

WHEREAS, pursuant to its home rule powers defined by the State of Illinois Constitution, the City of Chicago has the authority to regulate for the protection of the public health, safety, morals and welfare; and,

WHEREAS, according to a June 5, 2018, article published by the National Library of Medicine, researchers conducting a longitudinal design over 2 years comprising 4601 participants found a positive relationship between scores on problematic gaming and later scores on problematic gambling, demonstrating that video gaming problems appear to be a gateway behavior to problematic gambling behavior; and,

WHEREAS, West Virginia University is embarking on a two-year research program to study what makes slot machines a potentially addictive form of gambling, noting that while video gaming, slot machines, and other formats of gambling can produce gambling addiction solely via a biological predisposition, the structure of gambling products and environments also bring out the same tendencies; and,

WHEREAS, a 2002 study performed at Brown University and published in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Gambling Studies* demonstrates that video slot machines produce compulsive gamblers three-to-four times as quickly as other types of gaming or wagering activities; and,

WHEREAS, electronic gambling machines use structural characteristics that are believed to contribute to gambling-related harm, including “losses disguised as wins” (LDWs) in which net losses are celebrated somewhat like wins. A 2023 study published in *Addictive Behaviors Reports* indicated that in both high-risk and low-risk groups, LDWs stimulate win-overestimation effects that distort the number of genuine wins a gambler is achieving; and,

WHEREAS, on January 20, 2026, the *Chicago Sun-Times* reported that while 473 burglaries at establishments with video gaming terminals occurred last year, 219 of those burglaries occurred solely between October 1 and December 1, 2025; and,

WHEREAS, the *Chicago Sun-Times* also reported that there have been at least 40 such burglaries in 2026 thus far, demonstrating that the rapid pace of burglaries of video gaming terminal establishments that occurred in the last quarter of 2025 is continuing into 2026; and,

WHEREAS, the City Council can promote the public health, safety, and morals by further licensing video gaming terminals via Public Place of Amusement licensing; now therefore

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO:

SECTION 1 Section 4-156-305 of the Municipal Code is hereby amended by inserting the underscored text and removing the stricken text, as follows:

4-156-305 License – Exceptions

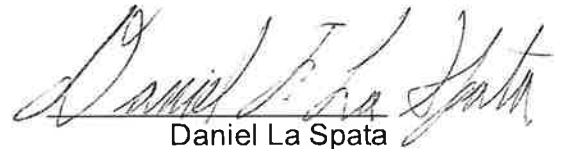
No public place of amusement license under this Article III shall be required, if the only amusement to be produced, presented, or conducted is one or more of the following:

(omitted text unaffected by this ordinance)

(l) one or more video gaming terminals, as defined in Chapter 4-155.

(omitted text unaffected by this ordinance)

SECTION 2. This ordinance shall take effect upon passage and publication.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Daniel La Spata", is written over a horizontal line.

Daniel La Spata
Alderman, 1st Ward