



Rick Goodling, Director of National Compliance, Pace-O-Matic

Thank you, members of the committee, for taking the time to learn more about skill games today.

My name is Rick Goodling. I retired from the Pennsylvania State Police in 2019 after 27 years of service. During my time in law enforcement, I was recognized as a national expert in illegal video gaming devices. For over 15 years I led the Gambling Unit for the Pennsylvania State Police.

For the last 5 years, I have served as the Director of National Compliance for Pace-O-Matic.

Today, I'm here to talk to you about the difference between Pace-O-Matic's Pennsylvania Skill game, and a slot machine - also known as a video gaming terminal, or VGT.

Simply put, one is based on skill, and the other is 100% based on chance. What does that mean? With a skill game, a patient skillful player can win every time they press the button on every play. The outcome of the game is based on the player's skill, and not on the software of the game.

With a slot machine or a VGT - it's all about chance. The game software determines the outcome of the game, not the skill of the player. That's because a slot machine has something called a retention ratio, which means a certain percentage of the money that's put into the machine must be retained. The machine controls whether you win or lose, not the person playing.

With a Pennsylvania Skill game, there is no retention rate. The player determines the outcome. Every time you hit play; you can win.

What about other alleged "skill games"? Remember this - IF YOU CAN'T WIN EVERY TIME, it's not a skill game. Skill games require player interaction, memory skills, and pattern recognition skills. The difference is quite clear and has been upheld in courts throughout the commonwealth many times.



There seems to be some confusion on this matter, but to be clear, there is a difference between a legal, unregulated skill game and an illegal slot machine. They are not one and the same. Skill games are legal under Pennsylvania law but need commonsense regulation to stabilize the market and continue to produce economic benefits for small businesses and the state.

Illegal slot machines are unregulated and illegal. That's an important distinction. So, what can be done about the illegal machines masquerading as skill games? Or the mini-casinos popping up all over the state?

Regulation is the only way to put a stop to the growth of illegal gambling machines. I want to take a moment to thank Senator Yaw for filing legislation to regulate skill games. His bill, Senate Bill 706, would give law enforcement the tools they need to identify skill games versus slot machines, locate bad actors, and shut down illegal gambling parlors.

His bill would establish limits on the number of terminals allowed in a location, it would limit the types of locations where the games may be played, and most importantly it would codify in statute what a true game of skill is. It's time to regulate skill games in Pennsylvania.

Thank you.