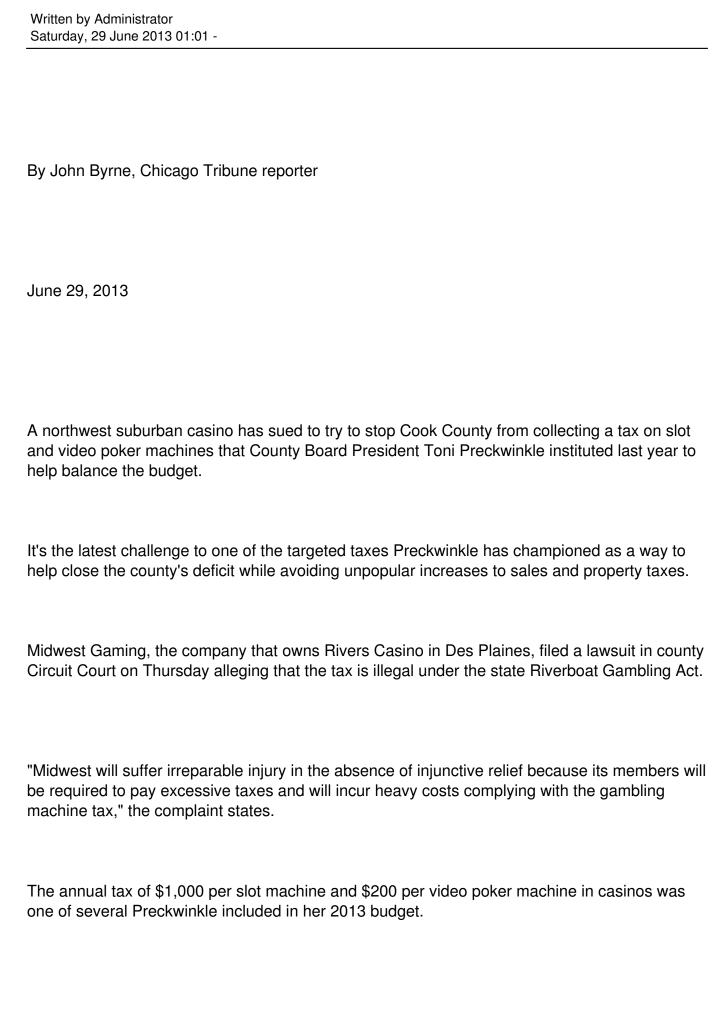
Rivers Casino sues county over tax



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Casino company spokesman Dennis Culloton said the taxes violate the Illinois Constitution. "For example, the county's tax interferes with exclusive jurisdiction of the Illinois Gaming Board and proposes to create a new body of regulators," Culloton said in an email. "The tax also creates an arbitrary two-tier tax system between gambling devices in casinos and video gaming terminals in bars and restaurants without furthering the supposed goals of the tax."

Preckwinkle spokeswoman Kristen Mack said the county intends to preserve the tax. "The annual tax amounts to a little more than one day's revenue and will be used to invest in public safety," Mack said in an email.

The county hopes to collect \$1.2 million annually from the tax this year and next. Rivers expects to pay roughly \$1 million each year. Much of the rest would come from suburban bars and fraternal service clubs that have video poker machines.

Earlier this month, the County Board reduced another of Preckwinkle's taxes in the face of lawsuits. Preckwinkle said cutting a use tax on certain items worth more than \$3,500 purchased outside Cook County to 0.75 percent from 1.25 percent would put the county on solid footing in court, but lawyers challenging the tax said they still believe it's illegal.

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