



*Tsi Nahò:ten Karihwanákere Nó:nen'k*

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **Kahnawake Gaming Law hits quarter century mark – challenges continue**

### For immediate release

**(Kahnawake – 9, Ohiarí:ha/June 2021)** The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke wishes to acknowledge the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passage of the visionary *Kahnawà:ke Gaming Law*, which was signed into law on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1996.

The significance of this law cannot be overstated. While its passage was done without much fanfare, it soon took on great importance when Kahnawà:ke took a lead role in the creation of the Internet Gaming phenomenon. The Law, and the regulatory body it created, the Kahnawà:ke Gaming Commission (KGC) grew into one of the most efficient and respected jurisdictions in the world. The rules and regulations the KGC developed have become a model for other jurisdictions around the globe.

Despite world-wide acceptance and recognition, challenges closer to home continue to this day. Neither Quebec nor Canada has formally accepted Kahnawake's jurisdiction in the matter of gaming. While formal challenges have been few, the lack of 'official' recognition has been a thorn in the side of the community for many years. This has been exacerbated by the recent furor over Canada's Bill-218, which would most probably shut Indigenous gaming out of the industry. In effect, Canada's legislation could be seen as "Kahnawà:ke creates, and Canada appropriates." While great efforts were put forth to create a 'carve out' for Indigenous gaming in Bill C-218, it has become clear that the 25-year battle for respect and acceptance from our nearest neighbors is not forthcoming.

With that being said, these challenges have not prevented Kahnawà:ke from continuing its role as a gaming leader. It will continue its pioneering role in providing the highest standard of fairness, player protection and responsible gaming not only in virtual world, but in land-based poker rooms – where world-class tournaments are held on an ongoing basis. As a result of this law, significant jobs and revenue have been created, which allows for greater self-sufficiency for the community.

Finally, it must be said that Canada should not fear Kahnawà:ke but, rather, find ways to work together. There are great benefits to be had by working collaboratively, which is a prospect that Kahnawà:ke has offered, and continues to offer, today.

This community had the foresight to hold the first-ever Mixed Martial Arts tournament in Canada the very same year that the *Kahnawà:ke Gaming Law* was passed. Both Internet gaming and MMA competitions have grown into great success stories, despite incredible resistance and – may we suggest – *fear* of our ambitions and aspirations from outside authorities. As pioneers in both, this community will continue to defend its right to an economy and a world leader in gaming. Through this law, it has certainly earned that right.