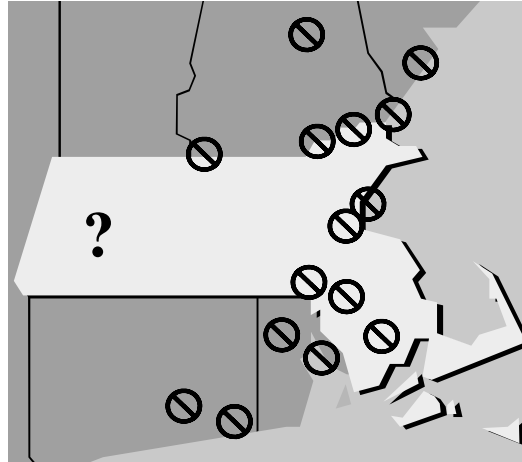


Fall 2007

# How many casinos do you want in Massachusetts?

(You can't have just one...)



Gambling prospectors are trying to make Massachusetts residents think that casinos are inevitable in the Commonwealth. Gambling expansion is not inevitable. But because of the way the Massachusetts law is written, if the state approves expanded gambling with slot machines, it's a good bet that we could have multiple casinos in state. The Governor has proposed three, but we could have five or more. And if Massachusetts goes, you can be sure there will be even more casinos in nearby southern New Hampshire and northern Rhode Island and Connecticut. But casinos and the problems they bring are not a done deal. **Read more to find out what the problems are and what you can do.**

## **Do you think the state should raise revenue off of its citizens' addiction?**

The *National Gambling Impact Study*, created and funded by Congress in 1999, found that the rate of problem and addicted gamblers doubles within a 50-mile radius of a gambling facility. About 4% or nearly 250,000 Massachusetts residents *already* had a gambling problem within the past year.<sup>1</sup> 250,000 people amounts to the entire population of the towns of Middleboro, Raynham, Taunton, Plainville, Palmer, Revere, and New Bedford combined.<sup>2</sup> Now our Governor is proposing to increase that number with the addition of three new casinos. **Our state government will be creating a new population of addicted gamblers, affecting their spouses, children, employers and the wider community.** Raising revenue off of the addiction of its citizens is not good government.

## **Do you want a casino your backyard? In your neighbor's backyard?**

The addition of a casino in a region adversely affects the quality of life in a community. Even the head of the American Gaming (Gambling) Association doesn't want a casino near his hometown:

"People have the right to go to the ballot box and determine what they want the quality of life to be in their own area. Now if someone were to come along and tell me that they were going to put a casino in McLean, Virginia, where I live, I would probably work very very hard against it. I just don't -- what's the old saying, 'NIMBY, not in my back yard?' Now I may be in favor of gaming, but I just don't want it located in a particular area." - *American Gaming Association CEO Frank Fahrenkopf*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.masscompulsivegambling.org/paths/what\\_prevalence.php](http://www.masscompulsivegambling.org/paths/what_prevalence.php) "Prevalence of Problem Gambling"

<sup>2</sup> Based on 2006 populations figures provided by [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov) in the town by town At-A Glance reports.

<sup>3</sup> From a speech in *Cleveland, Ohio, Oct. 24, 2006, Seventh Annual Commercial Real Estate Deal Maker Forum. See the video at:* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?FqIX3N58xas>

## Can you name a state that's solved budget problems with casinos?

Bet you can't! New Jersey has 17 casinos and a higher tax burden than MA. Connecticut has the 2 most profitable casinos in the world and a higher tax burden than MA. Rhode Island added slots to their racetrack and still has a higher tax burden than MA.<sup>4</sup>

**No state has solved their budget problems with expanded gambling.**

## How will we pay for the costs of gambling?

Proponents say 'people gamble in CT and bring their problems back here for us to deal with.' But the proponents are offering an illogical fix- they say, 'let's bring in casinos, create even more addicted gamblers, raise revenue off of their addiction and then use that money to fund treatment.' **Even if you never go to a casino, you will pay for the increased social costs.** Gambling expansion will affect us all.

## Who will care for the young, the old and the poor?

Although many people can gamble without a problem, gambling addiction does not discriminate by education, income, race, class or gender. But some of our neighbors are especially vulnerable.

**Good news for the young?** "Studies show that students have a problem gambling rate of 10-17%, or two to three times higher than the general population. At least 78% of all Massachusetts youth have placed a bet by age 18. This does not take into account the tens of thousands of children who are negatively impacted by their parent's gambling."<sup>5</sup> **Good news for the old?** More than 10% of people over the age of 65 are at risk of having financial problems because of gambling, but older gamblers often are reluctant to admit that they have a problem and need help. And older gamblers are the age group increasing at the fastest rate.<sup>6</sup> **Good news for the poor?** Researchers found that people from "disadvantaged neighborhoods have much higher rates of pathological or problem gambling than those who do not live in disadvantaged neighborhoods."<sup>7</sup> We will be judged as a state by how we treat the most vulnerable, the young, the elderly, the poor- and yet, we are considering importing something that disproportionately hurts the young, the elderly and the poor.

## Who will lose \$2,000,000,000?

Two billion dollars. That is the amount that Massachusetts residents must gamble and lose here for the state to take in the proposed \$400 million in 'new' revenue. That means each of the 6,349,097 residents must lose \$315 each year. And the average Massachusetts resident already spends \$ 903.63 on the lottery each year (a staggering figure, since it is an average not reflecting persons who do not buy lottery tickets). Will you lose \$1200 each year?

**What are you willing to lose? Money? Good government? And care for all of our neighbors? Casinos just aren't worth it.**

## What can you can do?

Visit the Mass. Council of Churches [www.masscouncilofchurches.org](http://www.masscouncilofchurches.org) for "12 things you can do to stop gambling expansion in MA." Most importantly, contact your elected officials. The Massachusetts House of Representatives will be critical to keeping casinos out of the commonwealth.

*Write a letter to your State Representative and let him/her know that you value the good quality of life in the Commonwealth and that you oppose casinos.*

To find out who your State Representative is, visit: [www.wheredoivotema.com](http://www.wheredoivotema.com)

Fill in your address and click on the name of the person listed as your "Rep in General Court." You can then write them a letter, schedule a meeting with your Representative or give them a call. Then email [council@masscouncilofchurches.org](mailto:council@masscouncilofchurches.org) to let us know how it went!

<sup>4</sup> The Tax Foundation, *State and Local Tax Burden Compared to Other U.S. States*, 2007

<sup>5</sup> [www.masscompulsivegambling.org/stuff/contentmgr/files/8ba17e6210b554976fc0c9407bb8d721/miscdocs/studentbrochurefinal.pdf](http://www.masscompulsivegambling.org/stuff/contentmgr/files/8ba17e6210b554976fc0c9407bb8d721/miscdocs/studentbrochurefinal.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Levens, Dyer, Zubritsky, Knott, and Oslin, "Gambling Among Older, Primary-Care Patients: An Important Public Health Concern" *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, Jan 2005; 13: 69 - 76.

<sup>7</sup> Welte, Wieczorek, Barnes, Tidwell, Hoffman, The Relationship of Ecological and Geographic Factors to Gambling Behavior and Pathology, 2003, *Journal of Gambling Studies*, pg 16