



Massachusetts Family Institute

Dedicated to Strengthening the Family

Issue in Focus

Casino Gambling Not a Sure Bet

Lessons Others have Learned

- Connecticut's casino gambling generates \$393M per year, but a study found that Connecticut pays \$539M each year to treat compulsive gamblers.
- A University of Illinois study concluded that the cost of increased social services exceeds revenue created from casino gambling by a large margin.
- In Minnesota, restaurant business within thirty miles of casinos offering food services declined 20% to 50%. Similarly, 40% of restaurants in Atlantic City closed within ten years of casinos being opened.
- Child abuse and neglect increased 50% in South Dakota after casinos opened.
- The number of battered women and children doubled in Biloxi, Mississippi a year after casino gambling was legalized.
- An estimated 40% of white-collar crime is caused by gambling.
- The FBI reports that legalized gambling leads to increased *illegal* gambling as well.
- Iowa, one of the first states to allow substantial casino gambling ten years ago, has now imposed a moratorium on new gambling.

Teen Gambling

- A recent study at Harvard University found that 10-17% of teenagers have a gambling problem—nearly three times the rate of adults.
- The Harvard study also found that at least 78% of Massachusetts teens have placed a bet by age 18.
- A recent study found that the average age of initiation for teen gamblers is 12.5 years.

The Massachusetts legislature is considering the expansion of legalized gambling. Proponents of casino gambling claim such a move will generate millions of dollars in annual revenue that can be used to fund programs and reduce the budget shortfall. They maintain that casinos are an economic windfall that will stimulate the economy. Massachusetts Family Institute believes that the introduction of casino gambling is a poor strategy for economic development and that the costs associated with it far outweigh any benefits.

The Costs

Americans spend more money each year on gambling than they do on groceries—nearly \$600 billion.

The revenue generated from casino gambling, touted as a harmless recreational pastime, is unlikely either to improve the state's financial condition or cover the costs of treating the social pathologies that result from gambling.

Gambling imposes a cruel form of taxation, disproportionately levied on those least able to afford it.

The gambling industry hires national lobbying firms to spend millions of dollars to influence lawmakers to permit casino-style gambling and also makes substantial political contributions to individual legislators.

The Damage

The damage to families and society caused by gambling is even greater than the fiscal harm of gaming. According to estimates by gambling councilors, about 20 million Americans, including millions of teens, suffer from gambling addiction as problem or pathological gamblers.

Communities struggle with business closings, low-paying jobs that provide few skills, and consumer dollars diverted to gambling. Increased crime taxes local law enforcement and social agencies.

Gambling leads to broken marriages, increased poverty and troubled children, as well as truncated careers and even incarceration.

Gambling is intimately related to organized crime, and the link is compounded by otherwise law-abiding citizens who turn to criminal activity to finance their gambling debts.

The Response

Call your representatives on Beacon Hill to let them know your opinion about casino gambling. The Massachusetts Family Institute web site (www.mafamily.org) lists contact information for your legislators and addresses gambling and other issues facing Massachusetts families.

Massachusetts Family Institute is a non-profit research and education organization dedicated to strengthening the family and affirming the Judeo-Christian principles upon which it is based. As a leading pro-family voice in the Commonwealth, the organization informs, equips and encourages citizens to rebuild communities in which families are valued and nurtured.