

Facts About the Expansion of Gambling

Gambling increases crime

■ Individuals are driven to crime by gambling. The National Council on Problem Gambling found that 75 percent of gamblers treated at in-patient treatment centers had committed a crime. *

■ In 1997, Nevada ranked nationally 37th for population, but 8th for index crime rate. Nevada also ranked 4th nationally for murders per 100,000 population; 3rd for rapes; 4th for robberies; and 13th for aggravated assaults. *

■ When compared to Florida jurisdictions of similar population, Atlantic City's 1997 Index Crime Rate is between 177 percent to 653 percent higher. *

■ Based on a Wisconsin study and adjusted for population size, Florida would experience an additional 14,328 serious crimes and an additional 17,100 arrests per year if casinos were introduced into the State. *

Gambling hurts the community

■ "Research indicates that increased availability of gambling opportunities increases the incidence of compulsive gambling," wrote the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling. *

■ A 1994 report said that each pathological gambler incurs \$13,600 in public expenses a year. Based on Florida's 1997 population, the public cost of such gamblers would be between \$2.04 billion and 10.20 billion a year. *

■ The National Research Council released a report that states "...in any given year, as many as 1.1 million adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18 are pathological gamblers." *

■ In Wisconsin, a study of problem gamblers indicated that an abnormally high number had thought about or planned suicide and 24 percent actually attempted it. *

Gambling hurts local business

■ Businesses around the casinos, particularly restaurants, suffer from the casinos' presence. In Minnesota, restaurant business within a 30-mile radius of casinos fell 20 to 50 percent. *

■ Proponents of casino gambling promise large amounts of money for the state. However, demands placed on the state as a result of the casinos reduce funds such as increased regulation of the industry, increased law enforcement costs and tax breaks lobbied for by the casinos. *

■ Unlike Las Vegas and Atlantic City where casino patrons are primarily tourists, Florida residents will likely be the primary source of revenue for the casinos. Consequently, Florida alone will feel the effects of the gambling industry, not surrounding states like Georgia or Alabama. *

■ Because most of the money casinos take in will be from Florida residents, this revenue will represent funds that would have been spent in other businesses, not newly found money. *

Gambling hurts tourism

■ Florida's beautiful beaches and family friendly attractions make it one of the top family vacation destinations in the country. According to the Orlando/Orange County Convention and Visitors Bureau, approximately 43 million people visited Central Florida in 2003 and 61 percent of visitors brought their children. On average, visitors stayed for 5.5 nights.

■ In comparison, according to the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, approximately 35 million visitors went to Las Vegas in 2003. On average, visitors stayed for 3.4 nights, 10 percent of people bringing children.

■ The stark contrast between Florida's tourism industry and Las Vegas' tourism industry is not a coincidence. Florida has a booming tourism industry and casino-style gambling will not attract more tourists to the family friendly attractions already offered.