



EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN CONNECTICUT
PARTICIPATING IN GOD'S MISSION

To: Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly

From: The Rt. Rev. Ian T. Douglas, Ph.D. Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut

Date: 8 March, 2017

Re: Opposition to S.B. 957: An Act Concerning the Regulation of Gaming and the Authorization of a Casio Gaming Facility in the State, and H.B.7239: An Act Providing for the Regulation of Gaming to Protect Public Safety and a Competitive Process to Issue a Gaming License.

Dear Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee:

I rise to strongly oppose: S.B. 957: An Act Concerning the Regulation of Gaming and the Authorization of a Casion Gaming Facility in the State, and H.B.7239: An Act Providing for the Regulation of Gaming to Protect Public Safety and a Competitive Process to Issue a Gaming License.

I am writing as both a registered voter in Essex, Connecticut and in my role as Bishop Diocesan of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut. As Bishop Diocesan I am the leader of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut, a Christian faith community made up of 168 parishes and churches across the state of Connecticut with close to 60,000 members located in almost every district of the Senate and House.

By resolution of our 1995 Annual Convention, the Episcopal Church in Connecticut has been against the expansion of casino gambling in the state of Connecticut for close to two decades. A copy of the resolution is attached. In addition, the wider Episcopal Church in the United States, by act of its General Convention in the year 2000, has "urged members, congregations, dioceses, provinces, and the National Church Center to work to end state-sponsored gambling and gaming." See attached Resolution 2000-Co44.

The Episcopal Church, nationally and here in Connecticut, has been against casino expansion and gambling because games of chance are a moral outrage that prey on the least and most vulnerable in our society. Casinos, especially "convenience casinos" that focus on gambling and lack tourist and retail establishments such as the one proposed for East Windsor, add no social or economic value to our community. Rather, they are a menace to our state and drain

financial resources from the pockets of hardworking families in Connecticut. As a pastor and bishop, I have seen first hand the pain and suffering of individuals and families whose lives have been destroyed by gambling addiction. A third casino in Connecticut would greatly add to the hurt, degradation, and evil caused by compulsive gambling.

The Episcopal Church is a committed member of the Coalition Against Casino Expansion in Connecticut, a broad based ecumenical and interfaith movement. The Coalition represents over one half of the people of Connecticut who count themselves as faithful members of mosques, temples and churches - including most mainline Protestant Churches and the three Roman Catholic dioceses in Connecticut.

As people of faith committed to the wholeness and health of all people created in the image of God, we commit ourselves to fighting the expansion of casinos in our great state. As the Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut and as a registered voter in Connecticut, I urge you to vote against S.B. 957: An Act Concerning the Regulation of Gaming and the Authorization of a Casio Gaming Facility in the State, and H.B.7239: An Act Providing for the Regulation of Gaming to Protect Public Safety and a Competitive Process to Issue a Gaming License

Thank you very much for your consideration of this testimony.

Faithfully,

The Rt. Rev. Ian T. Douglas, Ph.D.
Bishop Diocesan, The Episcopal Church in Connecticut.

Father Stanley then presented:

RESOLUTION #2 - The 1995 Diocesan Budget

RESOLVED: That this Diocesan Convention adopts the Diocesan Budget for 1996 as proposed, and that the total expense for the Diocesan Budget for 1996 not exceed \$3,660,000.

The Rev. Mr. Stanley moved Resolution #2 which was seconded by Mrs. Ceil Hansen. The Rev. Alistair Votaw, The Rev. Richard Simeone and Mr. Verne Blodgett spoke to the resolution. . The resolution was, on vote, adopted as presented.

The Rev. Mr. Stanley then presented:

RESOLUTION #4 - On Casino Gambling in Connecticut.

RESOLVED: That this convention make known to our State Legislature, during the special session on casino gambling, its' opposition to increasing access to casino gambling in Connecticut.

Father Stanley moved the resolution, which was seconded by The Rev. Alistair Votaw. Mr. Charles Moncreif and The Rev. Alistair Votaw spoke to the resolution. The motion was adopted as presented.

The Bishop then asked Mrs. June Aziz, Assistant Secretary and member of the Elections Committee to present the results of the balloting for the Standing Committee, the Provincial Synod and the 1997 General Convention.

For the Standing Committee:

Presbyters:

The Rev. Lyn G. Brakeman 226

The Rev. Patricia M. Portley 161

The Bishop declared The Rev. Lyn G. Brakeman elected.

Lay Persons

Maggie Alston Claud 223

Perry Williams 157

The Bishop declared Mrs. Maggie Alston Claud elected.

For Provincial Synod:

Clerical Delegate:

The Rev. John R. Gilchrist 183

The Rev. John C. L. Mitman 214

The Bishop declared The Rev. John C. L. Mitman elected as delegate and the Rev. John R. Gilchrist elected as alternate delegate.



Resolution Number: 2000-C044
Title: Increase Awareness of the Impact of Gambling and Gaming on Society
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 73rd General Convention note with dismay the increase of gambling and gaming in our society and:

1. **Encourage the clergy and pastoral caregivers of this Church to become familiar with the resources of Gamblers Anonymous (www.gamblersanonymous.org) and other organizations, which provide service to problem and addicted gamblers and their families;**
2. **Encourage parishes and church-related organizations to be aware of the inappropriateness of using gambling for fundraising purposes;**
3. **Endorse the recommendations of the bipartisan National Gambling Impact Study Commission for a moratorium on the expansion of gambling in states and localities, and for a gambling impact study to be conducted in each state and locality prior to the introduction or expansion of gambling;**
4. **Ask Executive Council to establish a Task Force on Gambling and Gaming to study the effects of this activity on persons and communities and to report back to the 74th General Convention;**
5. **Urge members, congregations, dioceses, provinces, and the National Church Center to work to end state-sponsored gambling and gaming; and**
6. **Encourage congregations and church related organizations to be inclusive of, and minister to, those persons related to and employed in the gambling industry.**

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Denver; 2000* (New York: General Convention, 2001), p. 365f.