

# Twelve Reasons to Oppose Legalizing Commercial Casino Gambling and Opening a Hartford Area Casino

**1. Costs.** According to economist Earl Grinols, the country's leading independent expert on the subject, the economic and social costs of introducing a casino into a new area heavily outweigh the benefits.

**2. Regressive Tax.** State-sponsored casino gambling represents a regressive tax on low-income residents, adding to the state's economic and social problems.

**3. Timing.** With the Northeast facing a growing casino glut, it is highly questionable the proposed casino could meet its revenue and employment goals. Casino winnings are flat or shrinking in many states, 5 of New Jersey's 12 casinos recently closed, and Connecticut's casino revenue is down 40%. A 2016 study by the Nelson Rockefeller Institute of Government warns States that while new casinos may generate short-run increases in public revenues, those revenues can quickly reverse and decline.

**4. Will Not Stimulate Economic Growth.** Over half of Connecticut's casino revenue originally came from out-of-staters, who brought new money to the state. But those customers have been declining and a convenience casino won't bring them back. As a result, the jobs and revenue produced by the casino would be funded overwhelmingly by the gambling losses of Connecticut residents, which would merely redistribute existing money within the state. The proposed casino would also take revenue and jobs from the state's existing casinos as well as from local restaurants and other entertainment businesses.

**5. Addiction.** Casinos spread gambling addiction, which leads to debt, bankruptcies, broken families, embezzlement and other crime. The National Council of Problem Gambling estimates that one in five gambling addicts attempts suicide, a rate higher than for any other addiction.

**6. Preying on the Vulnerable.** Multiple studies show that 35-50% of casino gambling revenue comes from problem and pathological gamblers. In other words, the casino industry's business model is dependent upon preying on people with gambling problems and up to half the money government obtains from casinos comes from those individuals and the people around them.

**7. Casinos Damage Local Communities.** According to a landmark report from the Institute for American Values, a non-partisan think tank, today's local and regional casinos drain wealth from communities, weaken nearby businesses, hurt property values, and reduce civic participation, family stability, and other forms of social capital.

**8. More Gambling.** The proposed convenience casino would keep some state residents from traveling to Springfield to gamble. But it would also expand casino gambling in Connecticut by making it more readily available to hundreds of thousands of Connecticut residents.

**9. Fairfield County Casinos.** Off-reservation commercial casino gambling is illegal in Connecticut. If Connecticut's casino tribes succeed in getting the law changed and opening a Hartford area casino, they can be expected to revive their original proposal to open two convenience casinos in Fairfield County.

**10. Further Expansion.** Legalizing commercial gambling could also open the door to others seeking licenses for casinos and other forms of gambling in Connecticut, including neighborhood slots parlors, Internet gambling and sports betting.

**11. The Compact.** Casino expansion could trigger a provision of the current state-tribal compact under which the tribes would no longer have to pay the state 25% of their slot machine revenue.

**12. Casinos Not a Solution.** New Jersey has had more experience with casinos than any state in the Northeast. On November 8, 2016 its residents voted 4-1 against a proposal to expand casino gambling beyond Atlantic City, reflecting the overwhelming view that casinos have become an economic and social dead end for New Jersey. They have become a dead end for our state as well. More gambling is not a solution for the economic challenges Connecticut faces.

## **The Coalition Against Casino Expansion in Connecticut**

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