

Testimony of the Reverend Denise Terry, 2309 Canyon Ridge Dr., Broad Brook, CT, 06016
March 9, 2017

Dear Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly,

I am the Reverend Denise Terry, I live in Broad Brook, CT, which is one of the 5 villages of East Windsor, CT. I am a member of the Coalition Against Casino Expansion in CT. I am also the Senior Pastor of the East Granby Congregational Church.

I am opposing Senate Bill 957: An Act Concerning the Regulation of Gaming and the Authorization of a Casino Gaming Facility in The State, and House Bill 7239: an Act Providing for the Regulation of Gaming to Protect Public Safety and a Competitive Process to Issue a Gaming License.

As a resident of East Windsor, and a Pastor in a community only 8 miles from the site of the proposed casino, I have 3 primary objections to the casino being built there.

First, I am concerned about the economic impacts to the community. MMCT has stated in prior testimony before this body on February 23rd, 2017, that they anticipate providing the state of CT with \$77 Million of revenue, annually, which would be 25% of gambling revenues totaling \$308 Million. MMCT has stated that they expect to derive this revenue from creating new gamblers from within a 19 mile radius of this proposed casino. That means this casino would drain \$308 Million annually from the pockets of residents, and the economy of East Windsor and the surrounding communities. The development deal MMCT signed with the First Selectman of East Windsor only provides for the town to receive \$8.5 Million in taxes and payments to offset impacts.

Second, lofty promises were made to the residents of East Windsor, that this casino would provide benefits of thousands of construction jobs, permanent jobs, and local economic impacts. In reality, the development deal MMCT signed with the First Selectman only commits MMCT to making “reasonable efforts” to employ 4% of 1700 permanent jobs (that is just 68 jobs) to residents of East Windsor. They admit that only 75% of ALL permanent jobs will be full-time positions. They also commit to only making “reasonable efforts” to hire a total of 15% of employees from within 25 miles of the new casino; that would be an additional 255 jobs. The other 1377 jobs would be offered to people living more than 25 miles from East Windsor.

When asked by a member of this Committee, at the Hearing on February 23rd, how many local vendors in the East Windsor or Windsor Locks area MMCT would plan to do business with, the Chairman of the Mohegan Tribal Council said “NONE” And he went on to say that they already use 1700 vendors, and that they’re just hoping to keep them in business.

In that same testimony, MMCT would make no commitment to hire CT union laborers to build the casino, and in fact acknowledged that it would be a lot cheaper for them to hire laborers from MA, due to the lower worker's comp. insurance costs there.

So, the positive impacts to the residents, and the Town of East Windsor, of a casino there will be minimal, at best.

Second, I am concerned about the impacts of traffic, crime, and decreased property values in the area surrounding the proposed site of this casino. I have to travel through the intersection where the casino will be built on my way to and from work, and just about anywhere else, every day. I also live just 3 miles from this site, on one of the two main streets through town. This area is already heavily congested, and MMCT is expecting 10,000 patrons to visit the casino, traveling on these two main roads, every day.

Third, I am concerned about the social costs, which have not been properly considered, or fairly compensated for. These include increased debt, bankruptcies, embezzlement, divorce, domestic violence, drunk driving, and addiction. As a recovering compulsive gambler, I am particularly sensitive to this issue. I don't want to live less than 3 miles from a casino, and to have to pass it at least twice each day. Casinos are triggers for me, and for many other people, and I don't want to have one in my community. I also don't want to have to move away from the community and the home that I love.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue, and for hearing my testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 957 and House Bill 7239, and in opposition to the expansion of casino gambling in CT, and especially in East Windsor.