

Dear Lawmakers,

My name is Patrick Thibodeau and I live in Enfield near the planned East Windsor casino and dread its arrival. And that's why I'm writing. I wish to express concern about legislation that will expand gambling in Connecticut

I am submitting this testimony in opposition to H.B. 7055: An Act Creating the Connecticut Gambling Commission and Creating a Competitive Bidding Process for a Resort Casino and I am also opposed to S.B. 11 An Act Concerning the Authorization of a Casino Gaming Facility in East Windsor. I am also opposed to S.B.17 An Act Authorizing Sports Wagering, Internet Gambling and Internet Keno. I'm also opposed to S.B. 665 An Act Concerning Sports Wagering.

A little background: There was no demand in Northern Connecticut for a casino. None. Many residents oppose it and there is a feeling that it was forced upon us.

You may think, what's the harm with building a casino in East Windsor? Especially since there is a casino in Springfield, about 10 miles away.

The East Windsor casino is completely unlike the Springfield facility.

It is a shopping center style facility just down the road from a Walmart. Our senior citizens -- and other vulnerable populations -- are going to feel a lot more comfortable going there than to Springfield. The dynamic is completely different.

A lot of us don't want this casino near our homes. The East Windsor casino site is near the Enfield town line.

There is a certain percentage of the population that is vulnerable to problem gambling. But a lot of those people will never really discover their problem until they have easy access to a casino. There's no shortage of studies that support a finding that as much as 50% of gambling revenue comes from problem gamblers.

We all worry that we will hear about friends, family and neighbors who have become problem gamblers.

There are real concerns about increases in DUI drivers on our local roads, something that has been true for Connecticut's other casinos. There are concerns about crime.

And now we're going to approve sports betting?

Why didn't the state didn't fund a study to examine the economic and social impacts of expanded gambling on our region?

How was the East Windsor casino win approval without examining its traffic impact on Enfield and Windsor Locks, in particular.

Connecticut has been ruined by lawmakers who didn't look out for the state. They shortchanged pensions and ran up the debt and are now using gambling to help get out of the mess they created. This solution just piles one moral harm upon another.

I am a proud member of the Coalition Against Casino Expansion in CT (CACE). A great group of people who stand for something. It's a faith-based group that is doing its best to look out for our families. If there's anything decent left in this state, you will do the same.

Sincerely,

Patrick Thibodeau
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