

Slots backers and opponents give nearly \$6 million to causes - Baltimore Sun

Written by Administrator
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Nearly \$6 million has been amassed in the battle over a ballot measure that could determine whether the state's largest slots parlor is built at Arundel Mills mall, according to campaign finance reports made public this weekend.

The Maryland Jockey Club leads the contributors, with \$3.3 million in contributions to No Slots at the Mall, the anti-slots group leading the fight against the ballot referendum, known as Question A.

Baltimore-based [Cordish Cos.](#), along with the mall owners, have donated \$2.6 million in funding to Jobs & Revenue for Anne Arundel County, which is pushing for the passage of the referendum. Arundel Mills Limited Partnership donated the bulk of the funds, with Cordish subsidiaries contributing \$600,000.

Anne Arundel County voters will decide in November whether to uphold the zoning for the casino approved by the County Council last year. Cordish Cos. wants to build a 4,750-slot-machine casino on the parking lot of the mall. The Jockey Club has supported the anti-slots group in hopes of eventually steering slots to Laurel Race Track, which it owns. State law allows only one slots license in a jurisdiction.

Much of the money spent has been on television advertisements, with the anti-slots group spending \$2.8 million on advertising and the pro-slots group spending \$1.3 million.

Representatives for No Slots at the Mall could not be reached for comment Sunday night.

It wasn't clear from the finance reports if [Penn National Gaming](#) directly contributed to the campaign. The company's holdings include a substantial stake in the Maryland Jockey Club as well as the recently opened slots parlor in [Cecil County](#).

In an e-mailed statement, Joseph Weinberg, a principal at Cordish, said the money spent by

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anti-slots group is evidence that it is "simply doing the bidding for Penn National, who wants to protect its massive profits" at its Charles Town, W.Va., casino.

At a press conference Friday, the filing deadline for the reports, Rob Annicelli, board member of No Slots at the Mall, responded to reporters' questions.

Annicelli said that his group has been upfront about the origin of its funding.

"We've made no secret that we're in a coalition with the Maryland Jockey Club," Annicelli said.

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