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South Carolina is one of the southern states that has for a long time discouraged gambling. Lawmakers for years have turned away the idea of bringing increased regulated gambling to the state, but as the economy continues to falter, that stance is changing.

North Charleston had a ban in place on casino gambling, but this week the City Council

members voted to overturn the ban. That would make gambling legal, and the next step could be bringing casino boats to the Cooper River.

"There are some people that gambling may have a negative effect on just as alcohol has a negative effect on, the smoking has a negative effect on," said Mayor Keith Summey. "But at the end of the day that's their choice."

That certainly was not the overwhelming opinion at a hearing Wednesday at the North Charleston City Hall. Many South Carolina residents showed up to voice their displeasure with the idea of lifting the gambling ban. The Council, however, voted 7-4 in favor of lifting the ban.

The debate that went on this week in South Carolina is one that is similar to debates taking place all across the country. Conservative anti-gambling groups argue that casinos are not an acceptable way to help budget constraints. They also argue that the social ills from the gambling outweigh the positives.

On the other side, gambling advocates believe that the jobs created by the casinos and the tax revenue generated would go a long way in fixing their local economies. Studies have been done on both sides of the issue, and lawmakers have documented the studies that defend their positions in many states.

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Posted By Tom Jones  
Staff Editor, CasinoGamblingWeb.com  
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