

Defenders of the proposed new casino at Arundel Mills Mall will attack Penn National for supposedly hurting the public good by trying to prevent a casino that would

compete with theirs in West Virginia and depriving the state of Maryland of the funds that would come its way through the casino. However, the Cordish Company, which would be the owner of the casino at Arundel Mills, is just as much of an evil behemoth as Penn National and would be the real beneficiary of the new casino.

Moreover, there would be various costs to having a new casino. A casino could not be made family-friendly in order to fit in at the mall. Wherever there is an increase in gambling in any given environment, there will be an increase in crime, drug and [alcohol abuse](#), gambling addictions and people who have spent their money on slots rather than on paying their rent or mortgages, paying their gas and electricity bills, or paying to put food on the table for their families. How much of these billions of dollars will the state of Maryland need to spend on police, addiction programs, welfare, health care and homeless programs as a result of the negative effects of gambling on people's lives? This is not family-friendly or beneficial to the state of Maryland.

Slots were marketed to us by our politicians as a fundraiser for education, as if the casinos are just having a really big bake sale. But we are dis-educating our children (and adults) by encouraging them to waste their money in gambling so that we can then put that money back into our schools, where our math teachers will hopefully show our students what percentage of your money you will lose, on average, when you gamble on slots. The net effect, to me, is negative.

The billions of dollars that the state would reap (and the billions going to [the Cordish Cos.](#)) have to come from somewhere — the pockets of Maryland citizens, mostly poor and middle class, who are going to gamble more and waste more money as the number of slots casinos increase, and more of them are going to fall into poverty. Many people innocently walking through Arundel Mills Mall will be tempted by slot machines when they would otherwise have easily avoided them.

Maybe a year ago I met a man in a local convenience store who was playing Keno, and I decided to buy a Keno card myself and sit down and talk to him as we played. The man showed me how to play the game, and I just played one card and left. The man told me that the first

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year he played Keno, a few years ago, he won a few thousand dollars, so he got addicted. He now spends \$100 a day playing Keno and had to get a second job to cover his Keno habit. How many people's lives are we going to destroy in this way by having slots at Arundel Mills Mall?

Rev. Brian Adams, Mt. Rainier

The writer is the pastor of Mt. Rainier Christian Church.

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