

Written by Administrator
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The Battle of Gettysburg ended on this day in 1863. Although it's strange to talk about winners and losers in the context of an event that killed almost 60,000 soldiers, the South lost the battle. It went down in history as the turning point of the Civil War.

Since then, the battle site has been preserved to memorialize the many dead and the pivotal moment in American history. Gettysburg National Military Park sees more than a million visitors each year. [According to](#) the Gettysburg Adams Chamber of Commerce, most of them are Americans travelling within their own country. To keep this onslaught of people entertained when they're not engaged in solemn commemoration, Adams County is [full of](#) historic sites, museums, farms and other activities. But though [corn mazes and petting zoos](#) are in keeping with local character, many argued that gambling was not.

Until recently, an Adams County businessman named David LeVan was seeking to build a "racino"—a racetrack and casino development—in Gettysburg, about three miles from the battleground park. The development, which was planned under recently changed Pennsylvania casino laws, has been cancelled for now—but LeVan was already a contentious figure in the debate over Gettysburg's storied history.

"It was LeVan's third attempt to bring gambling to Gettysburg in at least seven years," the Associated Press [explains](#) in a story printed in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. "Proposals sharply divided the community, and opponents argued it wasn't appropriate for the historic region."

The project would "have essentially created a racino in the heart of the historic Gettysburg Battlefield, which is visited by thousands of tourists every year," [reports](#) Ivan Potocki for *Casino opedia*.

One of the opposing groups, No Casino Gettysburg, [argues](#) on its website that the development would be "like putting a neon frame at the entrance to a national treasure."

By contrast, LeVan pointed out that his proposal would site the racino farther away from the

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Gettysburg park than the casino in Valley Forge is from Valley Forge National Historical Park, [writes](#) Samantha Beckett for Casino.org. And it's true that a number of historic sites in the country are located near casinos, including Valley Forge. But in 2012, [wrote](#) Tim Prudente in *The Frederick News Post*, supporters of state legislation that would have created a "10-mile buffer" around Gettysburg National Military Park argued that Gettysburg was different from those other sites.

"There are things you don't get to do on certain pieces of land because they represent something far greater to others," said Paul Bucha, a Vietnam veteran who testified during hearings on that bill, which did not ultimately pass.

But local opposition wasn't what halted LeVan's current project. In a statement, LeVan said that he hit stop because Pennsylvania recently changed its laws around gaming, Lillian Reed [wrote](#) for *The Evening Sun* on June 14. That day was when LeVan made the choice not to apply for what was the last available license that would have made his project possible.

"I continue to believe that a gaming project would be tremendous for the local Adams County economy, create thousands of jobs, and provide desperately needed funding for countless municipal and community projects," LeVan [said](#) in a release.

With this casino bid, LeVan found himself facing strong opposition that includes the 7,000 people who signed a petition opposing the racino, the National Park Service and the National Parks Conservation Association, according to Beckett.

"Gettysburg National Military Park has already proven to be an enduring part of the community," the NPCA said. "Approving a horse racetrack and casino would forever change this treasured place."

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