

Casinos are still a bad deal for the state

Written by Administrator
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Opening New Hampshire to casino gambling, as the state Senate did by a 13-11 vote last week, is an even worse idea than it was on Manchester Sen. Lou D'Allesandro's 2,347 past attempts to do so. The latter figure is a gross exaggeration – but so too, we believe, are the claims that permitting two casinos will net the state between \$100 million and \$200 million annually within the next few years.

The House, as its done many times in the past, should reject this latest attempt to make the gambling industry a major player in the state's politics and economy.

Earlier this month, in a *Boston Globe* story about the casino industry's struggle to meet revenue projections, gambling consultant Alan Woinski issued a warning New Hampshire's lawmakers should heed: "The Northeast market has been saturated for a while. It comes down to too many casinos going after the same customer," Woinski said.

The saturated market will get far more competitive this summer when a mega-casino opens in the Boston suburb of Everett, Mass., and tighter still when two federally recognized tribes open two new casinos in Connecticut. Several Native American tribes are also working to open new casinos in Massachusetts. It wouldn't be long before New Hampshire's casinos, if permitted, come before the Legislature to say that unless the state reduces its share of the take they'll be forced to close and put people out of work.

Tourism is a major contributor to New Hampshire's economy and more often than not, that means family tourism. Being one of only two New England states, Vermont being the other, where family vacations don't mean Mom and the kids at the pool and Dad at the poker table is an advantage, not a disadvantage.

Allowing casinos, which compete for gamblers with cheap meals and big-name entertainment, would hurt the state's existing restaurants, theaters and concert venues. Casino profits would not remain in local economies but flow out of state to major gambling corporations. Casinos are more likely to hurt than help the state's economy.

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Most of the tourists who visit New Hampshire have, or soon will have, a nearby casino. In most cases, as with the new casino being built by Wynn Resorts outside Boston and the Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun casinos in Connecticut, they will almost certainly be bigger and grander than anything built in New Hampshire. The majority of customers for any New Hampshire casino, as state Sen. Martha Fuller Clark has warned, will be New Hampshire residents. Some of their money will go to the state and most of it to casino owners. All or most of it will be lost.

While it's true that some New Hampshire residents go out of state to gamble, few do so with regularity. Put a casino in their backyard, however, and the losers will mostly be locals. Save for destinations like Las Vegas, most casinos draw their customers from within a 50-mile radius. The money they lose is money that won't go to local merchants, restaurants and gamblers' families. All the problems associated with gambling will likely increase.

Casino gambling is a sucker's bet for the Granite State.

Read more <https://www.concordmonitor.com/Casino-gambling-24428877>