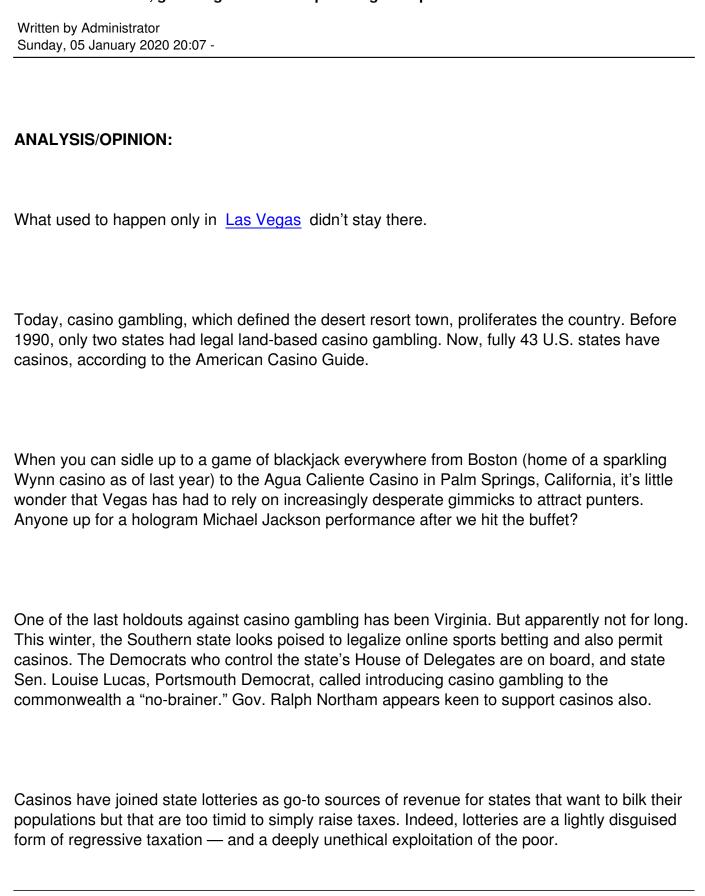
'No-brainer' casino, gambling bill would exploit Virginia's poor



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Written by Administrator Sunday, 05 January 2020 20:07 -

In 2018, Bankrate found that 28% of Americans who make less than \$30,000 a year bought lottery tickets at least once per week, each spending an average of \$412 a year on them. Perhaps needless to say, these are the Americans who can least afford to waste money on the lottery. And their own state governments are encouraging them to. It's downright perverse.

One need not be a blue-nosed church lady to recognize that casinos are similarly problematic. Indeed, casinos, despite their trappings of faux glamour and glitz, are gussied up lotteries — government-backed scams designed to raise "revenue." But of course, in order for them to raise "revenue," they have to succeed in separating punters from their money. The house has to win, in other words, and surprise, surprise, it always does. Casinos nationwide generate more than \$40 billion a year — largely by enticing participants to place losing bets.

Outside the United States, some countries are honest enough at what they're doing to rip off foreigners only. The more than a dozen casinos in South Korea, for instance, don't even let Koreans gamble in them. But in Virginia, the state's delegates appear eager to get their hands on their residents' wallets.

Moral concerns aside, Virginia's move to legalize casinos comes at a foolish time.

There's ample evidence that, with casinos now ensconced from coast to coast, the country is actually already overcasinoed and the extant casinos already appear to be cannibalizing each other.

The big daddies of tribal gambling, Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun, both in Connecticut, reported gambling revenue declines last year. So too did casinos in Las Vegas

, as well as those in Illinois, Michigan, and Missouri, among others. That glistening new Boston casino is coming in at well below projected revenues, too.

Virginia's casinos would face immediate heavy competition, especially from the MGM Casino in Oxon Hill, Maryland, just across from the Potomac River from the tony suburb of Alexandria. Oh that MGM Casino, for all its trappings, reported revenue declines last year too.

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The meager gains the state of Virginia could hope to glean from casinos also come with ample costs associated with their presence; exhaustive research from scholars at the University of Maryland has found statistically significant increases in suicide, mental illness, violent crime and substance abuse in communities after they legalized gambling.

Casino gambling is absolutely a no-brainer — just not in the sense that Ms. Lucas meant it.

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