



PCG Resolution on Casino Gambling

It is the conviction of Protestants for the Common Good that the “common good” is served when all citizens share in the benefits of society and no segment of the population shoulders an unfair portion of the costs. We commit ourselves to supporting those social policies which empower all people to participate in our political democracy and to opposing those which do not. Therefore, we resist all attempts to introduce casino gambling to the City of Chicago. We assert that:

1. the financial structure of casino gambling targets the poor, having the effect of levying a “regressive tax” and undermining the public policy of all citizens assuming a fair share of support for public expenditures;
2. the private profits of casino gambling accrue to a very few people while the social costs, which amount to almost double the public revenue, are borne by the many;
3. the infusion of casino gambling money into the political process corrupts the system,
4. the presence of casino gambling in Chicago ultimately will result in a few people benefiting from the arrangement while absolving many of their full civic responsibility.

Given our mission to act for social justice and the common good as an essential expression of the Christian faith by mobilizing other people of faith to become effective participants in political democracy, we oppose the establishment of a casino in Chicago because it will lead to further injustice in our society and serve to break down the common good.

Supporting notes:

1. In 1992, when there was an earlier push for a Chicago casino, the Better Government Association reported, “We’ve found that for a number of reasons, ease of play, immediate repeated gratification, and reinforcement, that slots fundamental appeal is to the low end ‘grind market.’” The editorial, “A Bad Bet,” in “The New York Times” (January 3, 2003), says, “What the (pro-gambling lobbyists) don’t add is that this so-called voluntary tax is regressive and saddles communities with unacceptably high social costs.” An article by Robyn Gearey in “The New Republic” (May 19, 1997), entitled, “Gaming the Poor: How State Governments Make

Big Bucks by Conning the Most Vulnerable,” documents the ways in which state lotteries are designed to hook the poor.

2. A study by Earl Gringols (Dept. of Economics, University of Illinois) and David B. Mustard (Dept. of Economics, University of Georgia) in 2001 on the costs and benefits of casino gambling shows that, by evaluating the cost to society of crime, lost productivity and time in businesses, bankruptcy, suicide, illness, additional social services, family disintegration, and governmental regulatory costs directly attributable to the casino industry, for every \$1.00 society gains from casino gambling it spends \$1.90. (“Business Profitability versus Social Profitability: Evaluating Industries with Externalities, The Case of Casinos”)
3. Dr. John Warren Kindt, a University of Illinois professor who has taught commerce and legal policy courses there, prepared a paper in 1998 for “The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science” entitled, “Follow the Money: Gambling, Ethics, and Subpoenas.” In it he discusses the establishment of the National Gambling Impact Study Commission in 1996 by the U.S. Congress as an attempt to blunt the threat of the gambling industry overwhelming the state and local government decision-making process and the objectivity of the court system. Dr. Kindt reports that the impact of gambling has expanded from isolated corruption of the political system to becoming “a pattern of coordinated abuse.”
4. This is a summary statement by the PCG Policy Committee based upon assumptions 1, 2, and 3.