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Gambling Alert - January 24, 2023



Casinos will do more harm than good in NYC

Contrary to popular belief, the social costs of these gambling establishments outweigh their supposed benefits of increased jobs and economic development claimed by pro-casino advocates.

Casinos hurt local businesses across the U.S. during the Great Recession. Retail sales growth rates were two to three times lower in casino areas than in noncasino areas from 2007 to 2012, according to my recent **analysis** of U.S. Census Bureau data across 39 states.

Casinos make economic downturns worse for local businesses, not better.

Yes, some gambling dollars will be diverted from nearby casinos. But the true goal of casino interests is to put one within walking/transit distance of the consumer spending of one of the highest-density populations in the U.S.

Opening casinos in Detroit did not stem the flow of gambling dollars to nearby Windsor, Canada. Instead, it more than doubled the overall gambling losses in the area, according to University of Nevada, Las Vegas professor William Thompson. Expect a similar

result in New York City.

The academic community has appropriately dismissed casino consultant reports with deep skepticism. Policymakers and the public would well-serve their communities by doing likewise. Gambling proponents have a vested interest to tout economic development claims, however shaky. Such claims sideline objections from local business leaders who will bear the biggest negative economic impacts and also provide cover for politicians seeking to **line their own pockets**.

Such claims also outshout opponents legitimately concerned about the high costs that accompany gambling, such as addiction, bankruptcy, corruption and crime. These **social costs of casinos** are three times higher than casino benefits, according to Baylor University economist Earl Grinols, yet most pro-gambling studies brush them aside.

Two other voices have recently weighed in on the possibility of a New York City casino. Former New York City Police Commissioner William Bratton, a Caesars Entertainment consultant, **suggests** that a casino will reduce crime. He is poorly informed. The **University of Illinois Law Review** notes that at least 8.6% of property crime and 12.6% of violent crime in counties with casinos would not be there without them.

Neil Barsky, the founder of The Marshall Project, **writes** that a casino will "help its most needy citizens." Replace "help" with the more honest "create" to feel how cringeworthy that notion is. Casinos make money because rapid-bet slot machines, the source of roughly 75% of casino revenues, are highly addictive. Addicts provide **roughly half** of slot machine revenues. You do not help the needy by supporting an activity that deliberately **exploits** vulnerable people – and adds them and their loved ones to the numbers of the needy. Despite self-interested pro-casino claims to the contrary, casinos have not been shown to bring economic development. My study across 15 years of data found no evidence of a casino-related boost in local retail sales growth across 39 states from 2002 to 2017. [READ](#)

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