



•The younger children start gambling, the more likely they will become habitual, problem gamblers, regardless whether from an urban or a suburban community.

Barron's front page : "**GATEWAY TO GAMBLING** - *Videogames are driving teenagers to online casinos. Millions are at risk...*" February 26, 2021

Researchers at Johns Hopkins' Bloomberg School of Public Health have published nearly a dozen papers on Baltimore youths and gambling. They found a strong link between gambling and other problems among the city's youth. Other studies in the Johns Hopkins' series found that gambling often leads to depression, crime, hopelessness and joblessness in young adulthood.

• ***Illegal Gambling Tends to Increase When a State Legalizes Gambling***

Despite the common selling point from commercialized gambling organizations that legalizing gambling will somehow decrease illegal operations, this just does not hold true. When gambling operators call for "regulation", what they really mean is government granting monopolies and awarding regulatory privileges to favored firms. Illegal gambling tends to increase when states sanction gambling because law-enforcement in those states begin to view gambling as a revenue issue instead of a crime, making enforcement of laws on illegal gambling, less of a priority. Also, once people begin gambling more in legalized venues, they become less adverse to gambling in illegal venues. Legalizing gambling normalizes it!!!!

If the illegal sports gambling operators supposedly cannot be controlled right now, as the big commercial gambling operators claim, then how can you control the gambling operators you license? If you can't shut down the illegal gambling operators now, how would you possibly shut down licensed gambling operators who do not follow the rules? Citizens lose protection and criminal enterprises are given greater cover.

Eagle Forum of Alabama: For more information, see www.alabamaeagle.org

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How Casinos Ruin Local Communities

• *Casinos supplant local businesses*

Casinos don't support local business, they supplant them. Many local businesses offer time-limited activities and they support overall mutual and community growth. Casinos on the other hand work to hoard all the business. They want you eating, sleeping, and entertained at their business. They have no clocks on the walls. They have no windows. If you're hungry, they will offer free food. They don't want anyone to leave until they have siphoned all your money from you. Casinos engineer the smells, the sights, and the sounds to disorient customers and keep them gambling. Atlantic City, for example, the city has struggled for decades to keep a single local grocery store open. Casinos are designed to keep customers betting until they've lost their last dime.

• *Casinos Prey on Their Local Communities*

Casinos sell themselves as a source of tax revenue for a city. But in the case of casinos and other forms of legalized gambling, that revenue is generated from the most vulnerable people in a local community. Multiple studies have shown that people who live in close proximity to a casino are more likely to have economic distress, foreclosures, domestic violence, and are twice as likely to become problem gamblers. So if a casino is claiming they are going to bring more revenue into a city, they are right. The problem is that it is coming from actually crippling the people who are in that local community. It has been proven that casinos drop local property value by up to 15%.

• *Casinos Create Problem or Compulsive Gamblers*

People who live in close proximity to a casino are twice as likely to become problem gamblers. Tragically, as more and more casinos have expanded across the country, so has the issue of problem gambling in the states where it is legalized. The reality is that 40 to 60% of all casino revenue comes from compulsive gamblers. Casinos are making an exorbitant profit off of problem gamblers. So the tax revenue argument is like saying, "since selling alcohol in our city generates more revenue, let's get more people to have a problem with alcohol." Sadly, gambling doesn't just affect the pocketbook of these gamblers, it affects their lives, and the lives of their families. According to the largest study of its kind, a 2019 report found that problem gamblers are 15 times more likely to commit suicide.

• *Casinos Prey on the Vulnerable*

An independent study concluded that those with higher incomes rarely gamble regularly at local casinos, while those on the lower end of the economic spectrum regularly do. This is by design. Casinos market to people who are already struggling. They present images of people getting rich quick. They offer free meals. They sell false hope. If you stay in a casino for five minutes, you will see that the marketing does not match reality.

The most common phrase you will hear in the casino is "good luck!" But the casino knows luck has nothing to do with it. Casinos are designed to end up with your money if they can just keep you gambling long enough to lose it. At a disproportionate rate, casinos are getting the poor to gamble with money they cannot afford to lose by offering a hope the casino is never going to fulfill.

Casinos also prey on the elderly. Most casinos offer specials to senior citizens, including driving senior citizens to the casino right after they have received their Social Security benefit. The goal is to get the seniors to spend their Social Security check at the casino before they've had a chance to spend it on things such as food and healthcare needs. Casinos are happy to serve alcohol while customers make major financial decisions. Casinos are often sued for avoiding paying winners.

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• ***Citizens are often Forced to Pay, Even if they Don't Play***

A 2016 report by The Rockefeller Institute at SUNY-Albany found that while states creating new revenue state streams from gambling may see a momentary bump in tax income, “ the revenue returns deteriorate - and often quickly.” government sanctioned gambling incurs major social costs that ended up being footed by all taxpayers...

All the citizens who don't gamble also pay another way. Government-sanctioned gambling lowers our national standard of living because it's a sterile transfer of money from millions of ordinary people's pockets into a small number of other people's pockets, producing nothing new and nothing of lasting value. ...It redistributes wealth without creating more.

• **As Casino Access Increases, Human Trafficking Increases**

Incredibly, every day in Alabama trafficking victimizes over 6000 human beings, including forced labor and sex trafficking (Global Slavery Index). That number will increase exponentially with more casinos. Study after study find links between casino gambling and sex buying. Even the American Gaming Association admits physical casinos can be trafficking locations. The Department of Homeland Security created a Tribal Gaming toolkit to help prevent such trafficking. In response to a 2021 proposal to build ONE casino in Hawaii, an official report concluded that prostitution and casinos go hand in hand - with problem gamblers 260% more likely to hire a prostitute. To meet this demand, young women become slaves.

CONCLUSION

Public officials who profess a desire to improve opportunity and alleviate poverty often lament how little they can do. Yet they are turning thousands upon thousands of people who are small earners, who could be small savers, into habitual bettors. They are facilitating family dissolution and corruption in government and young men hooked on betting.

Alabama's legalized gambling proposals will bring state-sanctioned hardship and decay to Alabama communities. Ten Casinos and counting... to enable Alabama to compete with gambling prolific states like Nevada for the most ways to lose their money to professionals.

Presently, Alabama has minimal gambling activity. Instead of the gambling industry wish list HB151-2, which even gives amnesty to lawbreakers, the Alabama legislature must pass simple measures to enforce present law against gambling with stricter penalties and more law enforcement resources. Then, Alabama can be a “gambling-free” haven to which there will come families seeking a wholesome environment and businesses seeking the work ethic so all can prosper.

<https://docs.house.gov/meetings/JU/JU08/20180927/108721/HHRG-115-JU08-Wstate-BernalL-20180927.pdf>

<https://gamblinghurtsalabama.com/articles%2Fresearch>

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