

An Act Establishing the Massachusetts Gaming Control Act - SD 1710

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The League of Women Voters opposes the bill “An Act Establishing the Massachusetts Gaming Control Act”- SD 1710

Lead Sponsor: Sen. Michael Morrissey

The League of Women Voters urges you to oppose “An Act Establishing the Massachusetts Gaming Control Act” – SD 1710.

Background: Although the League’s position in opposition to legalized casino gambling was adopted a number of years ago (1982), subsequent developments in the casino gambling industry have served to confirm the League’s original concerns about establishing casino gambling in Massachusetts.

During the 185th legislative session, the League joined with many other civic and religious organizations to defeat the proposal to allow the construction of “resort style” casinos with Class 3 gambling. Similar bills are being filed this session, and these bills will also allow slot machines at former dog racing tracks.

Talking Points: The League strongly opposes any legislation which would permit Class 3 gambling in Massachusetts for the following reasons.

- Gambling is no substitute for a reasonable tax policy, nor does it alleviate the need to increase taxes. All the states that have introduced gambling have higher taxes than Massachusetts.
- Casinos are not recession proof! During the current recession, existing casinos are losing revenue, laying off workers and many are in bankruptcy. For the state to consider such a venture now would be even more irresponsible than it would have been a year ago.
- Casinos, successful or not, threaten the lottery, and while the League opposes the lottery in principle, it is the main source of local aid.
- Casinos bring all sorts of social and economic problems to the community, such as increased traffic, pressure on the local infrastructure, and increased crime. The incidence of “white collar” crime, such as embezzlement, increases in proximity to casinos. Therefore, many new businesses and corporations are unwilling to locate near a casino. The experience in other states gives ample evidence of this.
- Although a casino will bring jobs, particularly in the construction phase, the experience in other locations has shown a net loss of jobs as many smaller businesses find that they can’t compete with the casinos.

- While most people who frequent casinos do so responsibly, a significant number develop serious gambling problems. Furthermore, many citizens here and elsewhere are struggling with severe financial problems, often not of their own making.

