



What About the Negative Consequences of Casinos? An Overview

"When the gaming palaces arrived in Kansas City, opponents refused to acknowledge that they would be responsible for any positive economic contributions. There were warnings instead that the cost of dealing with increased social pathology would more than offset any economic benefit created by riverboats. So far, however, the dire consequences haven't materialized. Meantime, the boats not only have created thousands of good-paying jobs, but also, as it apparently turns out, helped enhance the fortunes of other local workers as well. As for the overall benefit of the casinos themselves, a scientifically rigorous analysis of the gaming industry supports the view that (casinos) are spurs to economic growth." Jerry Heaster, Kansas City Star, April 17, 1999

"Gambling's opponents never tire of reciting statistics and anecdotes to suggest that the costs of legalized gambling dwarf any possible benefits. But they fail to count the central benefit -- the diversion and pleasure it provides to millions of people....The overwhelming majority of these patrons gamble responsibly and impose no burden on their fellow citizens....If gambling were the grim scourge portrayed by its opponents, it would not have gone from a contemptible vice to an innocent diversion in a single generation. People who have visited casinos and played the lottery have seen that misery and damnation don't necessarily follow, either for themselves or for surrounding communities." Stephen Chapman, Slate Magazine, October 16, 1998

The anti-gambling lobby desperately wants policy-makers and the public to believe that by virtue of giving people the freedom to play casino games, communities all over the country have first been turned into Sodom or Gomorrah, and then boarded up for good. They conveniently ignore evidence that removing prohibitions on **casino gambling brings capital investment, meaningful employment opportunities, and public sector revenues.**

The opponents of legalized gambling also can't seem to grasp that **millions of responsible adults across the United States are going out and having fun by playing casino games on occasion, without any dire "social costs."** Like many who want to curtail individual liberty and personal choice in the name of compassion for the putative victims of business enterprise, the anti-gambling lobby pays scant attention to the actual sentiments of those it would protect.

The anti-gambling lobby will tell you that the presence or expansion of casino gambling causes crime; that large numbers of persons gamble in ways that harm themselves or their families; that the presence of casino gambling detracts from existing businesses; that casino gambling preys on the poor; and that casino gambling damages the quality of life in its home communities.

None of these assertions is true. We encourage you to examine the materials contained in this section of our website, so you can determine for yourself the truth about the consequences of casino gaming.