



Concerned Women for America
Legislative Action Committee

Talking Points

State-Sponsored Predatory Gambling: Public Policy That Creates Addicts, Destroys Families and Wrecks Communities

“The price of ... gambling is turning out to be every bit as high as opponents had said it would be – not only for those who get caught directly in its web, but for everyone else as well.”

Editorial, Minneapolis Star Tribune (1995)

Gambling is Addictive

- In the United States, as many as 9.3 million adults and 1.3 million teenagers have some form of problem gambling behavior.¹
- *Industry Week* magazine called gambling the “fastest-growing addiction” in America.²
- According to a national gambling study by the National Institutes of Health (NIH)³,
 - At least one out of every twenty citizens has become addicted to gambling.
 - Over 80% of Americans gamble every year and between 3-5% of Americans have a gambling problem.
 - With the growth of gambling opportunities, a shift in the profile of gamblers shows more female, older, poorer and less white.
 - Living within 10 miles or less of a casino doubles the risk of problem gambling. Individuals living in a disadvantaged neighborhood have a 90% increase in the odds of being a problem or pathological gambler.

Gambling Hurts Women

- More women, typically the primary caregivers, are becoming gamblers.
- According to the National Council on Problem Gambling, among problem gamblers ages 45 to 64, women outnumber men.⁴
- When comparing men and woman gamblers, women begin gambling at an average age of 34.2 years versus 20.4 for men. While women tend to be older when they begin gambling frequently, the addiction becomes problematic faster than it does for men.⁵
- Women develop an addiction to gambling in one year versus four years for men.⁶
- Women tend to be ‘escape gamblers’ – those who are more drawn to machines that are based on luck to distract themselves from problems in their personal lives.⁷

Gambling Hurts Children

- Children of gambling addicts typically have lower grades, higher substance abuse rates, and the propensity to become gambling addicts themselves.

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- The harms to children of gambling addicts often include parental neglect and feelings of abandonment.
- There have been 262 cases of children left in cars at casinos in the U.S. in the last 20 years. There were also more reports of children left alone in cars at casinos between 2010 and 2014 than any other five-year span.”⁸
- In July and August of 2016, children were found unattended in cars at casinos in Detroit, Chicago and Scottsdale.

Gambling Hurts Adolescents, Teens, Young Adults

- Gambling is the fastest addiction among adolescents and teenagers.⁹
- It is estimated that as many as 750,000 of America's youth, ages 14 to 21, has a gambling addiction. Of that number, 11% of youth gamble twice per week or more; 68% report gambling at least once in the past year.¹⁰
- A national study of the gambling habits of Australia’s youth states children as young as ten years are battling serious gambling problems. Ten percent of children between the ages of 10 and 14 fit definitions of “at-risk” or “problem” gamblers.¹¹
- Casino visitors ages 21-35 had the highest rate of casino visitation and the greatest level of acceptance of casino gambling among all casino visitors; of these same casino visitors, nearly 4 out of 10 had gone to a casino in the past year, and 9 out of 10 agreed that casino gambling was acceptable for themselves and others.¹²
- The gambling industry is aggressively targeting millennials. Frank Fahrenkopf, former president and CEO of the American Gaming Association, had this to say about young people in a 2013 industry report, “they are the very people with whom the future of our business lies.”¹³

Gambling Wrecks Communities

The social costs of gambling include, but are not limited to crime, intervention programs, bankruptcy, business and employment costs such as lost time on the job, suicide, illness, family costs such as child and elder neglect and abuse. Taxes will have to be raised to pay for these publically-borne social costs.

Consider the social costs of gambling addictions obtained from the *Georgia State University Problem Gambling Research & Intervention Project*:¹⁴

- **Bankruptcy** – 20-30 percent of gambling addicts have declared bankruptcy, compared to 4.2 percent of low-risk gamblers and non-gamblers. The average cost to creditors per personal bankruptcy is \$39,000.
- **Debt/Spending patterns** – 90 percent of gambling addicts gamble with their paychecks or family savings, and 30 percent reported gambling debts ranging from \$75,000–\$150,000.
- **Correctional costs** – The estimated lifetime correctional costs of gambling addicts in Georgia is \$249,159,000.
- **Costs of property crimes related to gambling** – The average amount stolen per person who reported stealing (money and/or property) is \$135,000.
- **Work related costs** – The estimated cost to employers from gambling related absences is \$45 million.

Casinos Elevate the Risks for Sex Trafficking

- Of all the crimes associated with communities around casinos, one of the most disturbing is the sex trafficking of minors.¹⁵
- Atlanta is one of the largest hubs for human trafficking in the country.

- In a statement made to CBS 46 Atlanta by Mary Frances Bowley, who runs Wellspring Living, a nonprofit organization in Atlanta that helps young survivors of human trafficking, she said this: “In Georgia, we know there's a range from 200-300 girls that are trafficked each month in our city. And tonight there will be 100 girls that will be exploited in metro Atlanta. So the numbers are huge.”¹⁶
- Former State Attorney General Sam Olens called human trafficking a “brutal, complex and widespread crime.”¹⁷
- In 2016, nearly 70 were arrested in the metro Atlanta area as a part of a nationwide sex trafficking and prostitution sting.¹⁸
- “Casinos . . . bring men . . . with lots of money in their pocket . . . who are wanting to have a good time.”¹⁹
- In 2014, a law enforcement task force launched an investigation at Foxwoods Resort Casino into the use of online classified escort ads to arrange meetings with prostitutes.²⁰
- In a story on how girls are lured into prostitution by the *San Diego Union Tribune*, one of the persons interviewed stated, “ ... there was also evidence of human trafficking by Native American groups in casinos.”
- Passing a casino bill will make the state complicit in elevating the risk for expanded sex trafficking.

What the Bible Says About Gambling

Gambling, with its faith in luck and its worship of money, undercuts Biblical virtues of trust in God (Proverbs 3:5) and honest work (Ephesians 4:28). As Christians, we are not to put our hope in wealth (1 Timothy 6:17), be greedy (Colossians 3:5), oppress the poor (Zechariah 7:10), become addicted to anything (1 Corinthians 6:12), or love pleasure more than God (2 Timothy 3:4).

¹ Goodman, Robert, *Grand Illusions*, 24 WILSON QUARTERLY 24 (Autumn, 1995).

² Nina Georgia, *Gambling: A Bad Bet for Families*, *Family Voice*, Vo. 18, Issue 3, pp. 12-16 (March 1996).

³ <http://www.buffalo.edu/content/dam/www/ria/ES/ES3Gambling.pdf>.

⁴ Marotta, J., Bahan, M., Reynolds, A., Vander Linden, M., & Whyte, K. (2014). *2013 National Survey of Problem Gambling Services*. Washington DC: National Council on Problem Gambling.

⁵ Suzanne Koch Eckenrode, “Problem Gambling and Women”, <http://www.napafasa.org/resources/PGP.Problem%20Gambling%20and%20Women%20Rev.11.0321.pdf> (Accessed October 27, 2015).

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Daniel Bortz, “Gambling addiction affects more men and women, seduced by growing casino accessibility”, *U.S. News and World Report*, March 28, 2013, <http://www.nydailynews.com/life-style/health/gambling-addicts-seduced-growing-casino-accessibility-article-1.1301339> (Accessed October 27, 2015).

⁸ Jason Law and Maxim Alter, “I-Team: Children left alone in cars at Tri-State casinos a growing problem”, February 19, 2015, <http://www.wcpo.com/news/local-news/i-team/i-team-children-left-alone-in-cars-at-tri-state-casinos-a-growing-problem#sthash.Un9SiEKe.SkK29zaU.dpuf> (Accessed October 26, 2015)

⁹ “Gambling Addiction is Fastest Growing Addiction for Teens in 2012,” *YouTube*, America Now, May 22, 2012. Web. October 19, 2015.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, n3.

¹¹ Evonne Barry, “Junior gamblers battle addiction”, *Herald Sun*, June 26, 2012, Retrieved from <http://stoppredatorygambling.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/2012-Junior-gamblers-battle-addiction.pdf>.

¹² “Why Casinos Matter”, A Report from the Council on Casinos, <http://americanvalues.org/catalog/pdfs/why-casinos-matter.pdf> (Accessed October 29, 2015).

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ http://www2.gsu.edu/~psyjge/Fact/PG_%20Crime_04_10.pdf

¹⁵ “Regions With Casinos See Increase Sex Trafficking Among Minor,” Stop Predatory Gambling Foundation. Retrieved from <http://stoppredatorygambling.org/facts-research/spg-research-center/>

¹⁶ <http://www.cbs46.com/story/24425994/human-trafficking-brutal-and-widespread-in-georgia#ixzz4XwKp30Dm>

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ <http://www.11alive.com/news/70-arrested-in-fbi-sex-trafficking-prostitution-sting-in-georgia/337535520>

¹⁹ <https://www.onlinecasinoselite.org/post/how-to-fight-the-human-trafficking-at-casinos>

²⁰ <http://www.theday.com/article/20140128/NWS02/301289945/1018>