



AGAINST LEGALIZED GAMBLING

And the NATIONAL COALITION AGAINST GAMBLING EXPANSION

100 Maryland Avenue NE
Room 311
Washington, DC, 20002

www.ncalg.org
(800) 664-2680

Gambling expansion big loser in 2003

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For more information, contact:

Tom Grey, (312) 346-9766 , ext 131

NCALG National Office (800) 664-2680

What a difference a year makes!

Gambling expansion in America went from a sure thing to a bad bet in 2003. As the year began, both gambling media and gambling analysts predicted a massive expansion of gambling to fill looming state budget deficits. Governors had just been elected on platforms calling for expanding gambling to anchor their proposed budgets, and pro-gambling lobbyists were crawling all over legislative chambers greasing the expansion skids. Since gambling was already embedded in 48 states, and with 47 states facing deficits, gambling expansion appeared as automatic as the house always winning.

Instead, the expansion crapped out, went bust and turned up a loser! In 30 states, 45 different expansions were proposed with 42 defeated or rejected. The only three that survived were a “slot barn” in Bangor Maine, a lone casino boat on Lake Patoka in Orange County Indiana, and 10 slot machines in Oregon, a state that already had thousands of slots and video lottery terminals.

This, the third wave of gambling in America’s history, had been heralded as inevitable – a veritable wave of the future – but by year’s end it had washed out. It became an undesirable receding tide! What happened?

Simply put, this current gambling surge couldn’t beat the boom-to-bust cycle of the previous two binges. Historical odds aren’t in favor of unlimited casino expansion. The truth was, and is, that gambling contains the seeds of its own destruction. States, like individuals, cannot gamble themselves rich. But they can, and have, gambled themselves poor, as demonstrated by Nevada’s \$870 million budget deficit in 2003. Expanding gambling is a futile exercise in chasing ones existing gambling losses! Gambling continues to demonstrate its failure to solve state’s budget problems.

Worse, the past decades’ wave of expansion had drowned communities in a wake of victims. Millions of Americans have become pathological and problem gamblers. This increased addiction has brought with it increased bankruptcies and increased crime. Promoters and politicians have pointed to gambling as a painless revenue stream but the body count after two decades of gambling is too high, too visible and too painful to ignore or discredit as “anecdotal!” 2003 was the year community leaders really began to acknowledge the destructive cost of gambling in their midst. It has become a public health concern.

Gambling itself has been proven fatally flawed, unable to deliver on its promise of economic salvation, and has been unable to maintain its facade as a mere entertainment venue, like sporting events and the movies. It is has fallen to attacks from two disparate “G” factors: Greed and Good citizens. Every attempt to expand existing

gambling was fought by gambling interests that were already established. Greed versus greed created a pathetic spectacle of legislative greedlock that stopped a great deal of proposed gambling expansion.

But far more effective than the gambling industry's own greed was the collective power of good citizens who proved to be the real force behind this year's victories. These good citizens are concerned about economics justice.

They care about good public policy and they desire a better quality of life for their communities, their state and their nation. They are armed with the truth about gambling and fired by a commitment to declare, "Enough is enough!"

Determined resistance now greets each and every expansion effort.

With so much money at stake, we expect gambling promoters and their political hirelings will try and try again to use their money and political muscle to expand. But this year showed informed citizens will declare, "No Dice - No Deal!"

Tom Grey
Executive Director
National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling



SCORECARD 2003

Gambling proponents attempted to legalize 45 expansions in 30 states in 2003, but grass roots anti-gambling forces **won 42** of those battles and **lost only 3**. We beat them in the courts, in the ballot boxes, and in the capitals.

Slot Machines at Racetracks 19-2

Defeated for 2003: Alabama, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Colorado, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas. Slots were approved in Maine and approved for expansion in Oregon.

New Casinos 6-0,

Opening casinos in new states, defeated for 2003: Massachusetts, Montana, Nebraska, Rhode Island, Hawaii, Maine.

Expanding casinos 6-1

Bringing new casinos into states where they are already allowed, defeated for 2003: Michigan, Missouri, North Dakota, Oregon, Texas, and Wisconsin. In Indiana, voters approved the Lake Patoka riverboat.

Lotteries 5-0

Defeated for 2003: Alaska, Arkansas, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Wyoming.

Convenience Gambling 6-0

Lottery machines in liquor stores, convenience stores, taverns, supermarkets, etc. Defeated for 2003: Arkansas, Illinois, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Alaska, Washington.

45 Battles in 30 states, 42 Wins, 3 Losses.