

New Hampshire Gaming Study Commission
Public Session in Conway, NH
Granite State College, rooms 211 & 212
Tuesday, April 6, 2010
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Commission members in attendance: Dave Babson, Ned Densmore, Maggie Pritchard, and Bonnie Newman conference called in.

The Public Session was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

The Presiding Officer was former state Representative, Dave Babson. He introduced the attending commission members and acknowledged Commissioner Solomon and Representative Susan Wiley who were in the audience.

Mr. Babson explained the origin of the Gaming Study Commission and their assignment given to them by the Governor and the purpose of the public hearing, stating that public input would be part of the Commission's final report. He also explained the way that the public comment session would be conducted.

Five people spoke, all submitting talking cards against expanded gambling.

The first speaker, John Colony referred to *HB 489, relative to table gaming and video lottery at certain locations throughout the state and relative to the recovery of horse racing*. He felt there should be a competitive bidding process for locations that would like to embrace expanded gambling. The state should be looking for ways to save money and gave an example of using free software with free updates that work just as well as Microsoft Explorer. Gaming in the North Country would be out of place. Gaming ignores its surroundings and adds nothing to whatever area it inhabits. The North Country could benefit more from updating internet access, and intellectual capital. Establishing a college campus is a proven type of institution that would bring long term benefits both culturally and financially to its surrounding area.

Rev. Susan Ackley, a representative of the NH Council of Churches, a consortium of ten major Christian Religions spoke. They are united on moral grounds against gambling. Gambling violates justice and mercy. Justice, in that it is difficult to grasp a state that entices people into potentially addictive behavior. Any marketing for the gambling venues would basically seduce people into gambling and will expand the number of addicts in the state. There is a short term need to improve the moral, ethical and social needs of the citizens of NH. Mercy addresses that gambling impacts the poor, more than the well off, because gambling becomes a way to quickly fulfill the household budget for the month on a means that cannot be depended. This situation makes it more difficult to fulfill responsibilities and is a poor example for the youth of NH.

The next speaker, Dorothy Solomon, likes to gamble and believes that gambling will happen in N.H. It is mostly wanted in the southern part of the state. If it were to be established in Lincoln or Berlin there would be no benefit to the areas the visitors pass through to gamble. The roads and traffic burdens would need to be addressed. Local economy would lose because a casino will have restaurants, shopping and entertainment and visitors would not stop on the way to and from gambling. 17,000 slot machines would not bring in 17,000 jobs. All slot machines are computerized. A card is used, there are hardly any people needed to run slot machines and any jobs that gambling might generate would be low paying jobs with no tips. There would be the building of casinos however, they would be temporary jobs. There already is gambling going on in charities. What will happen to the charities with this income taken away from them?

Next Stanley Solomon spoke. He is a recreational gambler, he taught math and statistics and he enjoys the sport of gambling. He feels that any policy should satisfy what he refers to as the three P's:

Prudent, Progressive and Pragmatic.

Is it prudent to have gambling? What is the cost? What is the social cost? Would gambling create greater problems?

Is gambling progressive? The lottery did not solve our education problems. How would gambling benefit our future?

Is it pragmatic to establish gambling? Would this be a practical improvement to improve our economy?

If gambling fails, there will be a need to restructure the way people are taxed. There should be a greater study to go forward as not to create more problems.

Last to speak was Susan Ticehurst. If the Senate and the House agreed on this gambling study, and the Governor assigned this Commission to study expanded gambling she has serious concerns about the process. Since decisions are being made within the Senate and the House prior to the findings of the Gaming commission study.

At 6:40 p.m. Dave Babson called for a ten minute recess to wait for anyone else to attend the session. At 6:50 p.m. no one else joined the session so the session was adjourned.

Submitted by Jane Carey, Clerk