

PRO SAY GAMBLING WILL CREATE JOBS AND INCREASE REVENUE: ANTI SAY IT WILL TARNISH IMAGE



Union Construction workers from Pasadena say that if gambling is expanded in Maryland it will create jobs. However, those opposed to gambling argue that legalizing gambling and allowing casinos to open up, may be good for the economy, but would taint the image of the area. Both groups are firmly committed to ensuring that their desire prevails. The former support question 7 of the referendum whilst the latter oppose it. They say that they do not want Maryland to be branded as an entertainment capital and that it merits better branding than that. Those who are pro legalized gambling being introduced say that they cannot see anything wrong in it and don't know how it will jeopardize the state or the people who live there. "It's going to make money. There's going to be revenue generated," they argue. If question 7 meets with approval, it would remove all impediments for construction of a new Casino in Prince George's County. It would also sanction table games there and at the five Maryland locations now licensed for slot machines. Interested parties have put in as much as \$60 million into seeing that their interests are met. Penn National Gaming feels that if the casinos came up they would eat into its profits from its casinos in Perryville and West Virginia. On the other hand groups like MGM Entertainment Resorts know that legalized gambling means addition revenue and have thrown all its efforts into the ring. Legislative analysts believe that the gambling proposal that Question 7 would help implement, would raise \$200 million more each year than the existing slots-only program. This addition revenue they say will be directed towards education. Critics however aver, that if lawmakers direct this money towards education, they will give with one hand and take with the other and make other cuts, with education not benefiting in any manner from this new found revenue. "There's no guarantee that our legislature won't decide in a session or special session that we have an emergency and we're going to need that money for something else," a local resident said. Legal experts say that Question 7 has to get approval both within and in Prince George's County for the sixth casino to commence operations. If its victory is limited to the state than it can start table games only at the states existing legal slots sites. However, in the event of it even losing at the state level, permission will be denied everywhere. Brown, a congregant of the nondenominational Heart Church Ministries, is a strong opponent of legalizing gambling. She says that her religion is not the reason she opposes it but it is a "factor." She says that Prince George County should be a place where people can build professional careers. She said that the jobs that a casino would generate would be low-paying and not the "high-technology, environmental science and professional positions" that that county requires. Holding a high opinion of the people she said, "Other jobs don't fit the pedigree and the caliber of the residents that we have. I think there's a well-educated workforce who would like to see the brand continue in the track of technology, on the track of environmental sciences." Mrs. Brown says that it is ridiculous when people tell her that Maryland should have its own casino, because Marylanders have to go outside to gamble. Its better she says, "The farther people have to go, she says, the less danger of gambling addiction. However, Vogt, a native of Anne Arundel County does not concur with Brown. He says that his vote is a definite 'Yes.'" He feels that this would generate more than a 1000 jobs. He says people like him who are unemployed would jump at these jobs without thinking about there quality or the lack of it. "I'd like NASA to put up a place right there," he mocked. "It's just not in the cards. We've got to take what we can get jobs-wise."