

USS Mass - United to Stop Slots in Massachusetts

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Speaker's predatory gambling proposals fail "sniff test"

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(Boston) - In a rare address to members of the House, Speaker DeLeo reaffirmed his support of governing by gimmicks versus real reform and economic development. Less than a year after being a chief architect of the 25% sales tax increase he stated that he does not support more taxes; he continued by endorsing special interests in his district and proposing state sponsored expanded predatory gambling revenue, slots/casinos, often called "a tax on the poor".

Sound public and fiscal policy promote the public good, do no harm, increase opportunity and are sustainable. Speaker DeLeo does not seem to be aware that all legislation needs to be measured against philosophical and prudent benchmarks. His remarks reveal that his governing criteria do not include the basic tenants of legislative leadership by stating that his proposals to expand predatory gambling are "not philosophical".

While bi-partisan and non-partisan leaders across the state including Governor Patrick, Attorney General Martha Coakley, the Mass Chiefs of Police Association, United to Stop Slots in Massachusetts (USS Mass), League of Women Voters, Mass Council of Churches, National Association of Social Workers MA-chapter, Mass Family Institute, numerous statewide organizations and individuals are calling for a fresh independent cost-benefit, data-driven analysis of expanded gambling before legalizing slots or any additional form of predatory gambling, the Speaker has rejected this necessary quantitative and qualitative approach.

AG Coakley stated at legislative hearings in 2009, "Before the legislative debate on gaming even begins, the Commonwealth must have the law enforcement tools necessary to combat potential illegal influences both during the legislative debate and after proposed legislation becomes law in the Commonwealth." When asked how much that would cost, she replied, "expensive".

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Recent focus on the concentration of political power, ethical and legal problems associated with Legislators in the Commonwealth and the long history of corruption associated with the gambling industry requires elected officials to step-back and re-evaluate the proposals to legalize predatory gambling, slots/casinos.

Voters repeatedly state that politicians are not listening to their concerns including the negative fiscal impacts slots/casinos have upon entire regions, small businesses and local economies. The Globe released a poll (January 2010) that showed the majority of respondents (38%) oppose any form of expanded gambling, (30%) support casinos and (3%) support racinos/slot parlors.

Citing the long term economic drain, negative regional fiscal impacts, social and legal costs associated with predatory gambling slots/casinos, Kathleen Conley Norbut, president, USS Mass stated, "Mr. Speaker back-door taxes and gimmicks are not the way to gain the people's trust."

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