

*Not published
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Dear Editor:

As Mayor of Kingman, I believe in working with Indians to help them bring industry and opportunity to the reservations. What disturbs me - and the reason I am writing today - is that the issue of gambling on the reservations has created a lot of confusion and deeply divided Arizonans.

People in Arizona have strong feelings either for or against gambling. I hear from some that all gambling should be illegal; I also hear from others that every kind of gambling imaginable should be allowed. Indian gambling, though, is not about this. Indian gambling is about whether Arizonans, Indian and non-Indian, should have any say in what goes on within our borders.

Every time Arizona has faced a question about gambling, including the Lottery, our citizens have had the opportunity to express their views. Throughout this process, pros and cons are raised about what a certain type of gambling will or will not do to our quality of life. The decision that is made - whether I agree with it or not - is informed because of this process.

In the headlong rush toward full-scale casino gambling, for example, we have to look at the consequences in places like Bullhead City. After casinos went up in Laughlin across the river, Bullhead City saw its crime rates escalate dramatically. This municipality's fire, ambulance, and police forces have had to step forward, and the city's charities have had to provide for more people with drug addictions, alcohol addictions, and other social problems. In Redwood Falls, Minnesota, the small community right next to an Indian-run casino experienced a similarly dramatic rise in crime, including a 78% increase in juvenile crime. Both Redwood Falls and Bullhead City have one thing in common, however: the choice was made for both communities, and not one resident had a choice!

In Kingman, we too have to absorb some of the social costs of the gambling which goes on next door in Laughlin and Las Vegas, Nevada, plus it increased traffic on connecting roads which accelerated highway deterioration and increases accidents and fatalities. Mohave County, in particular, has seen its resources dwindle and the burden on the taxpayer increase. Once the Indians establish full-scale gambling statewide, every community in Arizona will be forced to become a Redwood Falls or a Bullhead City or a Kingman.

Our only choice would then be to legalize casinos statewide in order to raise the funds needed to pay for the social fallout. Most Arizonans do not want legalized casino gambling statewide. The Governor does not want this. In fact, if casinos were legal statewide, the Indian tribes no longer have the means of raising revenue they say they need at the same time our state - in the words of Governor Symington - becomes another Las Vegas.

All this, I repeat, could happen unless citizens step forward and support the Governor on this issue. He has been fair all along. He has been honest in granting the Indians a limited gambling monopoly, but he also made it clear from the outset that Arizona would fight unlimited and unregulated gaming on the scale some tribes demanded. The 250 slot machines at Fort McDowell, for example, generate almost \$23,000 per tribe member per year. The machines at Prescott generate roughly \$130,000 per year per resident!

However, when you go from 250 machines per tribe to 2,600 for each of our state's 21 tribes, you are talking about an industry of staggering proportions which will, regardless what you've been told, change the character of our great state.

Sincerely,

Carol S. Anderson
Mayor

CSA:njb