

# **Gambling with Aloha**

## **Legalizing Gambling Will Hurt Hawaii**

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### **Gambling Will Hurt Hawaii's Businesses**

People come to Hawaii for its natural beauty and the unique culture of our islands. People will not be drawn to Hawaii by gambling—there are cheaper, more established gambling destinations. In fact, the Hawaii Tourism Authority has passed a resolution against gambling out of concern that gambling will mar Hawaii's brand and turn visitors away. True, some people who come to Hawaii will spend their money on gambling if it is available, but that is money that would otherwise be spent on existing Hawaii businesses. Gambling will not make the pie bigger; it will just make everyone else's piece smaller.

### **Gambling Will Hurt Hawaii's Communities**

The presence of casinos tends to increase problem or pathological gambling. Individuals who live within 10 miles of a casino have more than twice the rate of pathological or problem gambling as those who live further away. Excessive gambling is associated with a variety of social problems, including job loss, substance abuse, crime, divorce, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, and homelessness.

### **Gambling Will Hurt Hawaii's Low-income People**

Gaming and lotteries function as a regressive "tax" on low-income people who ultimately pay higher percentages of their income toward the fees and taxes levied on gambling. Lotteries are a major concern because they are readily accessible throughout the state, and low-income people have consistently been shown to spend a larger share of their money on lottery tickets than do higher earners.

### **Gambling Will Endanger Safety**

Casinos have been shown empirically to increase the rates of serious crime including rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and auto theft.

### **Gambling Will Hurt Hawaii's Bottom Line**

The state will need to compensate for these social costs by increasing policing, social services, and establishing programs to deal with problem gambling. Casino gambling has been shown to cause up to \$289 in social costs for every \$46 of economic benefit. If legalized gambling is intended to cure problems with the economy or shortfalls in the state's budget, the side-effects are worse than the disease.