

The National Gambling Impact Study Commission was created by the 104th Congress through Public Law 104169, which was signed by President Clinton on August 3, 1996. The Commission is also known as NGISC.

Under that legislation, the Commission was charged to conduct a comprehensive legal and factual study of the social and economic impacts of gambling on federal, state, local, and Native American tribal governments; and on communities and social institutions.

The nine commissioners had two years to complete the study which cost five million dollars and consisted of over 150 pages. On June 19, 1999 the report was given to the President, members of Congress, governors and Indian Tribal leaders.

Gambling advocates and those against gambling immediately began selectively choosing the aspects of the report that seemed to best suit their positions.

At our COW meeting two weeks ago and in an Oct 6th Lansing Journal article we all were led to believe that we learned of the facts of this study. What we actually received was information on someone's opinion of the study printed in a publication called 'Citizen Link – Focus on Social Issues'.

There were dozens of articles published on the final report of the National Gambling Impact Study Commission. Each one was different depending on the writer's interpretation or their own opinion.

In April of 2000, just ten months after the final NGISC report was complete, a congressional request was made to the GAO to review the NGISC case study on gambling.

GAO is the Government Accounting Office which is a legislative branch government agency that provides auditing, evaluation, and investigative services for the United States Congress. It is the supreme audit institution of the federal government of the United States.

The resulting 67 page report was titled:
Impact of Gambling: Economic Effects More Measurable Than Social Effects
(04/27/2000)

As agreed with the official requestor, The Honorable Frank R. Wolf, House of Representatives, the Government Accounting Office report focused on four topics:

(1) The economic effects of gambling, particularly on employment\bankruptcy, and tax revenues and community investment;

Government Accounting Office noted that:

(a) According to the NGISC report, in 1996, the legalized gambling industry employed over a half million people.

(b) NGISC did not report whether there was a cause-effect relationship between gambling and bankruptcy for the general population but found that a higher percentage of pathological gamblers had filed bankruptcy than others in the general population.

(c) NGISC reported that the casino industry paid \$2.9 billion in federal, state, and local taxes in 1995.

(d) Atlantic City casinos paid about \$319 million in gambling taxes to New Jersey and over \$86 million in property taxes to Atlantic City in 1998, representing about 80 percent of total property taxes for the city's budget.

(e) From 1985 through 1999, about 900 million dollars of casino community reinvestment funds had been earmarked for community investment in Atlantic City, including housing, road improvements.

(2) The social effects of gambling;

(a) Neither National Gambling Impact Study Commission nor GAO's Atlantic City case study was able to clearly identify the social effects of gambling for a variety of reasons.

(b) While data on family problems, crime, and suicide are available, tracking systems generally do not collect data on the causes of these incidents, so they cannot be linked to gambling.

(3) The prevalence of pathological gambling;

GAO noted that:

(a) While studies have shown increases in social costs of pathological gamblers, it is difficult to isolate whether gambling is the only factor causing these problems because pathological gamblers often have other behavior disorders.

(b) NGISC reported on three studies completed in 1997 and 1998 that estimated the percentage of U.S. adults classified as pathological gamblers ranged from 1.2 to 1.6 percent of the population.

(4) Whether communities offer incentives to attract gambling establishments.

GAO noted that:

(a) The NGISC study did not address whether communities offered incentives to attract gambling establishments.

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Now, let me go back to that final NGISC report – not someone’s interpretation of the report, the actual, official, report –

The very first sentence in Chapter One titled “Overview” reads... Today the vast majority of Americans either gamble recreationally or experience no measurable side effects related to their gambling, or they choose not to gamble at all.

Let me repeat that....

On page 29 of Chapter 7 titled “Gambling’s Impact on People and Places” in the official report it states:

The Commission fundamentally respects the wisdom of the American people to decide what is best for themselves and for their families. As Thomas Jefferson wrote more than 200 hundred years ago, “I know of no safe repository of the ultimate power of society but the people themselves.”

This, ladies and gentlemen, is not a moral issue, it is about economics and facts. The statement I just read to you is fact, taken from government documents. The following are my comments and my opinion.

Some people believe that gambling is wrong or unhealthy for our society. Others believe that guns or raffles or bingo are wrong. Some believe that alcohol or cigarettes are what is wrong with our society. All of the “vices” I just mentioned are legal in our state and in our village.

I serve on the Executive board of SSMMA. That organization represents 42 municipalities representing a population more than 650,000 in Cook and Will Counties. SSMMA members work cooperatively on transportation, legislation, land use, economic development, recycling, purchasing, stormwater and open space planning,

In 2020 Wentworth Avenue will be resurfaced from Ridge Road north to the expressway – we received a grant from SSMMA for that project.

SSMMA's position on a casino anywhere in the south suburbs is that they are positive about how many jobs a casino will bring to our area.

Last week I spoke to the Chief of Police in Hammond Indiana. John Doughty. He told me that the Hammond Police Department receives one million dollars a year from the casino there. Their FD also gets one million.

Chief Doughty also mentioned that they do have arrests and crime at the casino. However, most of their calls are about patrons consuming too much alcohol or someone being asked to leave. Nothing more than they experience at any other establishment in their city.

Police Chief Bill Alcott of Homewood reported at a recent board meeting that should the casino be built in his community, he does not anticipate hiring any additional officers because departments near similar casinos aren't seeing major upticks in crime rates.

Last Week I attended an event hosted by Sherriff Tom Dart at Glenwood Academy. I had a chance to talk to East Hazel Crest Police Chief Roy Janich at that event and he said his community is very hopeful that the casino will be in their area and that he hopes the 1500 people that live in East Hazel Crest will benefit from the economic growth.

Contrary to what someone named Mary, with an anonymous last name, wrote as a comment on the Oct 6<sup>th</sup> Lansing Journal article...I am not a true gambler...in fact, my husband and I wouldn't normally up any of our free time or hard-earned money to gamble. However, I do enjoy a glass of wine from time-to-time.

I respect the 6 people that emailed me on this topic. I thanked them for taking the time to write to me. None of the email messages were more than two sentences and they all revolved around someone else's opinion.

Can I guarantee that IF Calumet City is given the casino license that everything will be perfect, of course not!

Please remember that as stated in the Government Accounting Office report: No one was able to clearly identify the social effects of gambling. While data on family problems, crime, and suicide are available, tracking systems generally do not collect data on the causes of these incidents, so they cannot be linked to gambling.

While studies have shown increases in social costs of pathological gamblers, it is difficult to isolate whether gambling is the only factor causing these problems because pathological gamblers often have other behavior disorders.

We should be careful and avoid compromising any possibility of revenue sharing should Calumet City be successful in their bid for the casino license.

If I was voting on Resolution 1139, I would vote yes!

If anyone is interested in the resources I used for this information, I will be glad to provide it to you.