

Let me first thank each of you who has taken the time to write to me and those who are here tonight for your active participation on this issue. I especially want to thank my fellow trustee and friend Jerry Zeldenrust for the many discussions we have had on this. This issue is complex, and both side passionate, but all of us have shown a level of respect for each other's point of views that we can be proud of. We are a community. And like a family, we may not always agree with each other, but we will always know what we speak is honest and comes from the heart.

I am in favor of supporting our neighbor, Calumet City, in its bid for a gaming facility, not because I am a fan of gambling, but because I understand that at a time where development in this area is stagnant and where jobs and the attention of politicians in Springfield and Washington is often elsewhere, we have to be aggressive as a region in pursuit of economic dollars.

Many of you have told me that there is a high cost to pay when gambling comes to town. Crime and the problems of gambling addiction outweigh the potential benefit. But a facility in Calumet City would be no farther from our town that it is now, as there are casinos just across the state line in Hammond.

Many of our residents and residents of surrounding towns gamble at casinos in Indiana. In a way, the ills are already with us. Crime and addiction do not stop at state lines, but funding and tax revenues do, and that's why I support Calumet City's bid.

If a Calumet City facility can keep millions of casino revenue in our state. That means additional tax revenue for our state. Lansing stands to gain of the 3% adjusted gross revenue that is apportioned to surrounding municipalities. This revenue that we desperately need and which, on balance, comes with acceptable cost to our community. Casino taxes will help our region avoid spending cuts or other tax increases, that will further limit our ability to pave roads, invest in our police and fire, and support growth of other businesses.

But my support is not unconditional. I want others on this board and in this room to know that while I support the bid and welcome the development we must commit to using any additional revenue intelligently, addressing some of the social needs of our community as well as the infrastructure needs and not

squander our responsibility to continually reassess the impact of the choices we make here today and do what.

We must engage fellow local and state leaders to create support for those who may have addiction issues.

Tough times call for tough decisions, and this is one of them. But it would be easy to vote and walk away from responsibility. And you know me, that's not my style. So long as I am on this board and I am in this community, it is my responsibility to make sure any facility and those behind it are accountable to those who are impacted, THIS IS ONE BET YOU ALL CAN BE COMFORTABLE WITH.