

Statement on Commercial Gambling
by
Louisiana's Catholic Bishops
1992

The Louisiana Catholic Conference (LCC) has reiterated its stand against casino gambling, a position taken in 1986 when casino gambling was proposed as a state revenue source.

Members of the board of LCC, comprised of the Bishops of Louisiana's seven Catholic dioceses, voted at a recent meeting to reissue the statement on gambling published Jan. 7, 1986.

The statement said:

"We, the Catholic Bishops of Louisiana, recognize that the Governor of Louisiana, faced with declining revenues and continuing demand for state services and support programs, has turned, probably in frustration, to gambling as a possible source of state revenue.

We must, however, oppose the proposal for casino gambling. Our opposition derives from moral considerations which include our concern for the effects on the lives of individuals as well as families and the long-range effects on the development of our natural resources.

Considering the evil effects which casino gambling has brought to other locales, there is ample evidence to indicate that casino gambling here will undermine both the spirit of industriousness of our people and a reliance upon the benefits of labor. It will also hinder the needed development of our natural resources with which God has so bountifully endowed this state. A greater development of agriculture as well as a more creative use of our many natural resources by industrial development would provide more employment and income to the state.

Casino gambling, we fear, will have a particularly detrimental effect on family life which has already suffered severely from other factors in our society. The financial benefits in terms of tax revenues from casino gambling must also be weighed against other factors. These factors include the financial drain on families and the community, and the erosion of industriousness and responsibility of individuals.

We make a distinction between casino gambling and bingo which is social entertainment as well as fund-raising for charitable purposes without incurring the evils of casino gambling.

We remind those in state government and the public at large that the Catholic Bishops of Louisiana have not been averse to supporting revenue measures

that would benefit the social service and educational programs of this state-- and that we have supported taxes for such purposes even when they have been unpopular.

We stand ready to work with the Governor, the Legislature, the business community, labor and all other groups willing to work toward improving the efficiency of state government and toward other immediate and long-range measures which would shore up the state budget."

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The Bishops took note at the time of this 1986 statement that a vote on the Louisiana state lottery probably was upcoming. They said at the time:

"We leave to the judgment of Louisiana's voters the question of whether Louisiana should, like many other states, institute a state lottery. The people would have to judge, in amending the constitution, whether the benefits of such revenues would out-weigh any drawbacks aired during public debate prior to an election on this issue."

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