

2024 Alabama Pastors' Resolution Against Predatory Gambling

WHEREAS, Alabama legislators have introduced legislation that would allow for additional forms of commercialized gambling in Alabama including casinos, online gambling, and commercialized sports betting; and

WHEREAS, kids are being harmed by a bombardment of gambling advertising like never before, normalizing them to the dangers of commercialized gambling and making them far more likely to develop problems later in life;¹ and

WHEREAS, commercialized gambling is now recognized as an addiction *on the same level as heroin, cocaine, and opioids* in the American Psychiatric Association's DSM V, used by health care providers and insurers as the principal source for mental health diagnoses; and

WHEREAS, "predatory gambling" occurs when state governments partner with powerful corporate gambling interests to use *commercialized* gambling – gambling *being run as a business* that creates an *adversarial relationship* between the gambling operator and the gambler – to exploit and defraud citizens and their communities; and

WHEREAS, what separates commercialized gambling from every other business, including other vices like alcohol and tobacco, is that it is in essence a big con game; it is a form of consumer financial fraud and exploitation, similar to price-gouging and false advertising; and

WHEREAS, when you pay for a plate of BBQ, a ticket to a sporting event, a glass of sweet tea, or other kinds of goods and services, that's what you receive in return; and

WHEREAS, in commercialized gambling, what you receive *is a financial exchange* offering the *lure* that *you might* win money. But this financial exchange is mathematically stacked against you so inevitably you will lose your money in the end, especially if you keep gambling. Citizens are conned into thinking they can win money on games that are designed to get them fleeced in the end. Success only comes at someone else's expense; and

WHEREAS, U.S. families are on course to lose more than \$1 trillion of personal wealth to commercialized gambling over the next 6 years, an average of at least \$150 billion of lost personal wealth every year, which is \$285,000 every minute²; and

¹ "Children are more likely to become gamblers due to high volume of betting ads," The Guardian (UK) March 26, 2020 at <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/mar/27children-more-likely-to-become-gamblers-due-to-high-volume-of-betting-ads> ; "One in ten children admit gambling with their own money..."The Daily Mail (UK) Nov. 9, 2020 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-892725/One-in-ten-children-admit-gambling-money.html>; "Shocking toll of gambling advertisements on children: Two in three teenagers say they feel bombarded by betting firms," The Daily Mail, Jan.28, 2018 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/newsarticle-5323373/Two-in-three-teenagers-feel-bombarded-betting-firms-html>

²H2 Gambling Capital, 2024 <https://h2gc.com/>

WHEREAS, commercialized gambling has proven to be a major budget gimmick because while states creating new revenue streams from gambling may see momentary bumps in tax income, “in the long-run, the growth in state revenues from gambling activities slows or even reverses and declines” according to the Rockefeller Institute’s 2016 national report; and

WHEREAS, the reason is because income from commercialized gambling does not grow over time like general tax revenue, and expenditures on education and other programs will grow more rapidly than gambling revenue. As a result, new gambling operations that are intended to pay for normal increases in state spending [add to, rather than ease, long-term budget imbalances](#)³; and

WHEREAS, beyond its status as a budgetary shell game, commercialized gambling incurs major social costs that end up footed by all taxpayers. In addition to targeting and exploiting [the financially desperate](#) and [cultivating addiction](#), commercialized gambling leads to [increases](#) in rates of personal bankruptcy, divorce, and domestic violence, and [provides new avenues](#) for crimes like human sex trafficking and money laundering.⁴ Gambling operators don’t pay for the harms they cause families, businesses, and communities. *Taxpayers do*. Lower-income Americans lose their money on gambling, get it back by relying on more financial help from the government, who then get it from taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, all the citizens who don’t gamble also pay another way: commercialized gambling lowers our standard of living because it’s a sterile transfer of money from millions of ordinary people’s pockets into a small number of other people’s pockets, producing nothing new and nothing of lasting value. Its economic impact is similar to throwing your money on the street so someone else can pick it up – it redistributes wealth without creating it. Because this nonproductive activity nevertheless uses up time and resources, we experience a reduced standard of living, a consequence that impacts all of us; and

WHEREAS, the proposed establishment of the gambling industry in Alabama violates free-market principles by instituting a politically-protected industry that will drain customers from legitimate businesses not similarly protected; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, We, Alabama Pastors whose signatures are listed below, urge the members of the Alabama Legislature to cease and desist with any efforts to expand commercialized gambling in the State of Alabama; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this Resolution be immediately transmitted to the Chairman of the Alabama Republican Party and to all elected Republican officials in the

³ “State Revenues from Gambling: Short-Term Relief, Long-Term Disappointment,” Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government, SUNY-Albany, April 2015 https://www.rockinst.org/pdf/government_finance/2016-04-12-Blinken_Report_Three.pdf; “The Fiscal Impact of Commercialized Gambling on State Budgets,” Dr. Lucy Dadayan of The Urban Institute, April 2023. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5gdVC_x6Os&t=2s

⁴ Institute for American Values, Why Casinos Matter; Institute for American Values, Council on Casinos, Why Casinos Matter, Thirty-One Evidence-Based Propositions from the Health and Social Sciences, September 2013, Pg. 20, <https://stpppredatorygambling.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/2013-Why-Casinos-Matter-FINAL-pdf>

