



Position

Papers

GAMBLING



### ISSUE

In response to recent efforts to expand gambling in Alaska, Rep. Nancy Dahlstrom (R) Eagle River and Rep. Harry Crawford (D) Anchorage introduced [HJR2](#), a resolution that would amend Alaska's Constitution to require an affirmative vote of the people before any form of gambling for profit may be authorized in Alaska.

### ALASKA FAMILY COUNCIL POSITION

The Alaska Family Council supports any efforts to stop the expansion of gambling in our state. Gambling is driven by and subsists on greed. For this reason, the activity is morally bankrupt from its very foundation. Gambling is also an activity which exploits the vulnerable — the young, the old, and those susceptible to addictive behaviors. Further, gambling entices the financially disadvantaged classes with the unrealistic hope of escape from poverty through instant riches, thus ultimately worsening the plight of our poorest citizens. Gambling undermines the work ethic. It is based on the premise of something for nothing, a concept that sanctions idleness rather than industriousness, slothfulness instead of initiative.

Legalized gambling devastates families. Authorities in gambling jurisdictions report dramatic increases in divorce, suicide, bankruptcy, and child abuse and domestic violence related to gambling. Research also has shown that children of gambling addicts experience lower levels of mental health and physical well-being.

### IMPORTANT FACTS

In Alaska, municipalities and qualified non-profit organizations can offer certain charitable gaming activities : bingo, pulltabs, raffles, lotteries, fish derbies, and other contests of skill. Approximately 56 tribal organizations are licensed for charitable gaming by the State of Alaska (2005). There are also three tribes that operate Class II gambling facilities. These Class II facilities offer pulltabs and traditional bingo. Gambling revenue for charitable gambling and Class II gambling in 2005 was about \$6.9 million

The more tangible downsides to gambling are similarly disturbing. Legalized gambling breeds a host of social ills, as has been demonstrated time and time again in areas where gambling has been introduced on a widespread basis. Legalized gambling creates gambling addicts. An abundance of research and expert testimony demonstrates that as gambling expands, so does the number of those with serious gambling problems. Millions more Americans have developed devastating gambling addictions over the last few years as a direct result of gambling's rapid proliferation. Further, these newly created addicts are the life-blood of the industry. Preliminary research indicates that a third or more of gambling revenues come from problem and pathological gamblers.

### PROBLEM

Efforts are underway to expand gambling and make it a revenue source for the State of Alaska.

### FACTS

On August 26th of 2008, Alaskans will be asked to vote on whether an Alaska Gaming Commission should be established. This Governor-appointed, five-member group will have the legal ability to expand gambling in Alaska. As a Dept. of Revenue entity, this Commission will have very little incentive to examine the harmful and addictive consequences and societal costs of gambling.

In response to this initiative, a resolution, HJR2, has been introduced that will amend our state constitution to require a majority vote by the people of Alaska before any form of gambling may be authorized in our state.

### SOLUTION

Encourage legislators to vote YES on [HJR2](#).

**ACTION ITEM**  
**SUPPORT HJR2**