



Georgia Baptist Mission Board

RESOLUTION ON CASINO GAMBLING AND PARI-MUTUEL WAGERING ON HORSE RACING

Submitted by: Tommy Fountain, Messenger Grace Baptist Church, Monroe, Ga

WHEREAS, the Georgia Baptist Convention has frequently stated its opposition to the gambling industry, and the devastating effects of gambling upon the moral and economic life of our nation; and

WHEREAS, the Bible indicates that man is to work creatively and use his possessions for the good of others (Eph. 4:28); gambling fosters a something-for-nothing attitude. The Bible calls for careful stewardship; gambling calls for reckless abandon. The Bible condemns covetousness and materialism (Matt. 6:24-34); gambling has both at its heart. The Christian work ethic is damaged by gambling; and

WHEREAS, Georgia Republican and Democrat legislators are discussing legislation that would allow for casino gambling and for pari-mutuel wagering on horse racing in Georgia; and

WHEREAS, aggressive actions by gambling interests in recent months make abundantly clear their intention of seeking to expand legalized gambling in Georgia, including pari-mutuel gambling or wagering on horse racing and casino gambling; and

WHEREAS, out-of-state corporations and businesses are poised to invest multi-millions of dollars in a bold effort to change state laws to allow casinos and pari-mutuel gambling; and

WHEREAS, the usual arguments for increasing gambling continue to be "this will create jobs" and "it is for the children", because it will generate revenue for Pre-K and for the HOPE scholarship, and

WHEREAS, these reasons fail to overcome the societal costs of gambling, which are substantial; risks include such consequences as (1) the break-up of families, because gamblers are twice as likely to divorce as non-gamblers, (2) an increase of local crime by at least eight percent within five years or less after the establishment of a casino, as experienced by states that have allowed casino gambling, (3) local job loss because local citizens change their spending habits, (4) an increase of bankruptcies, and (5) an increase of child neglect and domestic violence; and

WHEREAS, once the gambling industry is allowed to operate legally in the state, its lobbying power will grow and increase its influence over legislators and local community officials; and

WHEREAS, once the State of Georgia allows Class III gambling, as described in this resolution, this would open the door for any Indian tribe to venue shop for property to open casinos on land that would be taken out of the governance of the State and off the local tax digest;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge the members of the Georgia Legislature to cease and desist with any efforts to open the State of Georgia to casino gambling and pari-mutuel wagering on horse racing; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge state legislators to have the moral courage to oppose the efforts by representatives of the lucrative gambling industry, who unashamedly seek to exert their influence in the political process with the proceeds of their nefarious profits; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we pray for and lend our aid and support to Mike Griffin and our Public Affairs Ministry as we confront this menacing issue in the days to come; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that copies of this Resolution be forwarded to Georgia's Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House and the sitting state senators and representatives who represent the people of Georgia.