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Gambling - You Pay Whether or not You Play

Cost to Individuals

Suicide – ½ of addicted gamblers contemplate suicide, 1/5 attempt suicide
Addiction – Gambling operations get most of their profit from addicted gamblers. 1/25 casino gamblers, 1/5 sports gamblers become problem gamblers. Children & youth are more vulnerable to gambling addiction. This feeds into other addictive behavior. When sports gambling became legal in TN, calls to addiction hotline sky-rocketed.
Bankruptcies – When a gambler bankrupts, their creditors are hurt – and all who work for them.
Crime – Organized crime, personal property crimes, white collar crime, assaults
Divorce – 2 ½ times the rate of divorce for non-gamblers
Abuse of Spouses & Children
Sex trafficking/Prostitution

Cost to Economy

Personal Savings dwindle, leaving no emergency net.
Non-secured debt increases.
Spending on basics like clothes, cars, appliances goes down.
Burden on health care system increases due to addiction issues, stress related conditions.
Jobs and businesses are destroyed as gambling cannibalizes local restaurants, venues, and retail.
Businesses are hurt by rising personal bankruptcies, loss of productivity.
Employees addicted to gambling more likely to steal from employers, get fired, or miss days of work.

Cost to Government

Crime investigation - theft, embezzlement, organized crime, trafficking,
Social services cost – Welfare, food stamps, housing assistance
Court system becomes more congested with rising divorce, bankruptcy, collections, criminal cases
Jail Costs, Monitoring of Parolees
Unemployment

Common Arguments for Gambling w/ Answers

- 1. People are gambling anyway.** If commercial gambling is legalized in GA, problem gambling rates likely double, ads promoting gambling would be legal, and the government can confiscate personal property to cover gambling debts. You could also say "People are already _____ anyway" – speeding, stealing, abusing, raping, trafficking – Is that OK as long as we can tax and regulate it?
- 2. It's a free market issue.** Gambling is not free market as an entire regulatory agency is created and legislators limit markets via licensing to a few profiteers.
- 3. Gambling doesn't hurt anyone but the gambler.** See previous page.
- 4. I gamble and I don't have a problem or addiction.** Gambling business makes little profit off nonproblem gamblers and can't succeed without creating problem gamblers. Their games are designed to trigger addiction in vulnerable people.
- 5. People are crossing state lines to gamble.** First – gambling and problem gambling increase dramatically with easy accessibility. Second – look at every state that relies on gambling revenue – their economy and social stats are worse than Georgia's. Do we really want our state to be more like Mississippi, Louisiana, Illinois, New Jersey, Kentucky...?
- 6. We need the tax revenue.** First, the costs from gambling issues far exceed the revenue. One could use the same excuse for legalizing opioids. Next, as gambling operations make huge profits, they have \$\$ to influence your elections. They will replace "unfriendly" lawmakers, then systematically lessen taxes and regulation of gambling. Last, if casinos are allowed in GA, Indian tribes will be able to open casinos that are less regulated and pay NO state taxes.
- 7. It will be good for GA tourism, or agribusiness, or sports franchises.** It will be bad for Georgians GA government, and GA businesses.
- 8. Sports gambling isn't bad like casinos.** It is 5x more addictive, much more accessible because the "casino" is your phone or computer. That makes children easy targets.
- 9. Horse racing is cool.** You can race horses without gambling. But they can't make profit from gambling on horse racing alone – most US tracks have either shut down or become "racinos" with casino games.
- 10. Gambling is like investing in the stock market.** Big difference– when you invest in the market, you have reasonable expectation of profit, the company you invest in expects to profit, and the customer benefits by increased goods or services. With gambling, the gambling companies win, almost everyone else loses. Those rare gamblers who win today usually lose tomorrow.
- 11. Don't force your religious views on the rest of us.** It would be so easy to make a number of "religious" arguments against gambling, but the economic and social realities related to gambling are so compelling, common sense should suffice.
- 12. I like my neighborhood poker night or office pool on sports games.** We are referring to commercialized gambling, not casual betting among friends or co-workers.