



New Hampshire Council of Churches

People of faith strengthening New Hampshire communities!

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Joint Statement on Expanded Gambling

“Our faith calls us to work for justice; to serve those in need; to pursue peace; and to defend the life, dignity, and rights of all our sisters and brothers. This is the call of Jesus, the challenge of the prophets, and the living tradition of our Church.”¹

The New Hampshire Council of Churches, comprised of delegates representing member denominations of Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic traditions in the state of New Hampshire, are united in our opposition to the expansion of gambling in New Hampshire.

Some of us oppose gambling on principle. Some accept the gambling that exists: the state sponsored lottery, non-profit Monte Carlo nights, and church bingo. All of us reject the expansion of gambling that would establish casinos and legalize video lottery (slot) machines, both forms of gambling that studies have shown are particularly addictive and result in social problems and increased criminal activity.

Our faith teaches that the role of government is to maintain order, preserve justice, and promote the common good. In this moment, we believe that the proper role of government is to distinguish between legitimate forms of gambling that serve as amusement, and illegitimate and inappropriate forms of gambling that have been shown to be particularly addictive and lead to excessive gambling and deprivation of the basic needs of persons, which we believe to be a violation of justice. New Hampshire must continue to promote the values of education, hard work, and dignity of labor and reject the illusion of easy money. Encouraging a “something for nothing” attitude transforms state government from a preserver of the well being of its citizens to an exploiter of its citizens’ weaknesses and addictions.

For all these reasons, we believe that the expansion of gambling is not a responsible solution to our state’s financial problems.²

Adopted by the Board of Directors May 20, 2010

*Member Denominations: American Baptist, Episcopal, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America,
Friends, Greek Orthodox, Presbyterian Church/USA, Roman Catholic, United Church of Christ, United
Methodist, Unitarian Universalist*

¹ A Century of Catholic Social Teaching; A Common Heritage, A Continuing Challenge.

² Material in this report is drawn from Public Policy Statements of the New Hampshire Council of Churches, the Statement on Expansion of Gambling in New Hampshire by the Diocese of Manchester, the Public Statement of Missouri Religious Leaders Regarding Expansion of State-Sponsored Gambling” dated April 23, 2002. and the Granite State Coalition Against Expanded Gambling’s website.