

# Voice of the People

## Questions on Gambling

To The Editor:

In the light of the current discussions on legalized gambling in Atlantic City, I cannot resist pointing up certain problems for consideration by those actively involved and by the citizens of Atlantic City in general.

1. The most important problem will be the income flowing from the operation, whether it is to stay in the city or go to the state. It seems to me that if the city holds out for any portion of this income, the state simply will not allow it. Half a loaf being better than none, and since we are primarily interested in the visitors rather than the proceeds, Atlantic City should propose to the state that practically all proceeds go to the state.

2. The proper approach might be that these proceeds could make a contribution in lieu of a state income tax, or in the direction of reducing the state sales tax.

3. The problem must be solved as to whether there will be a publicly owned casino, or private operations in which hotel and motel operators will be licensed.

4. The most rigid kind of control possible must be set up to prevent organized crime from entering the picture.

5. Since existing gambling

licensees in the Caribbean will not be receptive and will certainly tend to oppose and obstruct the proposal on the state level, it might be wise to invite those interests which are already involved in gambling licenses in the Caribbean and who also have hotel and motel investments in Atlantic City to participate in discussions.

6. The nonestablishment minority groups should firm up their position in this matter and, it seems to me, should organize immediately so that their interests will be protected. Nonestablishment minority groups always complain that any changes always benefit the establishment. This is one time when these groups can make their voices heard so that they take part in the structure and form that the gaming proposal will take and thus have some of the advantages flow directly, rather than indirectly, to these minority groups.

7. It seems to me that Atlantic City has little or no chance of having the gaming proposal being accepted unless a sophisticated and intelligent public relations campaign is mounted on the state level. The thrust of the propaganda should be in two directions:

a. That substantial excess income will flow into the state treasury;

b. That by putting gambling in the southern and less populated part of the state, the evil

effect of major crime and community and political involvement could be "insulated" from the great and complicated metropolitan north. The arguments must run to show that the insulation can be accomplished by restricting the legalized gaming to South Jersey whereas the problems involved in North Jersey would be unsurmountable.

8. A publicly owned casino without licensees must be considered and certainly the bare acres of the uptown redevelopment area suggests this interesting use. It might be that a publicly run casino plus licensees could be the answer.

Legalized gaming is coming to the United States. It is a part of the changing moral attitudes which are creating a social revolution on many levels.

Atlantic City is going to be a part of this change and must do so with clear eyes and "open covenants openly arrived at."

If this becomes a political football with the insiders reaping windfall and gain, it will do the city no good.

If the proposal is well and honestly considered, it would be a blessing. However, without disinterested honesty, without careful and professional planning, it could just as easily be a disaster.

REESE PALLEY  
1911 Boardwalk  
Atlantic City