



## NEWS

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**New Chicago Crime Commission analysis reveals Senate Bill 744 lacks regulatory safeguards**  
*Father Michael Pfleger and Bishop Ed Peecer warn gambling expansion will harm neighborhoods*

For Immediate Release

**Chicago, IL –Wednesday, August 3, 2011** - A new analysis by the Chicago Crime Commission reveals that the gambling expansion bill passed by the Illinois legislature is critically flawed due to a lack of regulatory safeguards and should be reconsidered. Additionally, Chicago religious leaders expressed serious concern that the proposed gambling expansion will have a devastating social impact on their communities.

Jody Weis, Deputy Director of the Chicago Crime Commission, stated that the analysis of the bill has caused the Commission to conclude that the new Gaming Act cannot be successfully implemented in its present form and should not be made into law in Illinois. Weis cautioned that a high risk of scandal and corruption could be expected if the bill were to be enacted.

The analysis of the bill by Commission Executive Vice President Art Bilek reveals that the five new casinos, six racinos and 39,200 new gaming positions, including the 4,000 gambling positions in Chicago alone, provided under the bill would completely swamp the licensing and regulatory capabilities of the Illinois Gaming Board.

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“Even more troubling,” Bilek said, “the bill jeopardizes the regulatory integrity of the Illinois Gaming Board by setting unrealistic timelines to investigate gaming license applicants.” Furthermore, the bill is void of any provision to hire additional investigative personnel needed to begin policing this gaming expansion behemoth.

“For example, Bilek pointed out, “under the bill the Illinois Gaming Board would only have 60 days to award or deny licenses to applicants for video poker machines in taverns and truck stops.” If the new deadline was not met, applicants would automatically be given a provisional license, even if the investigations and background checks were incomplete. Also, the applications for new casinos would have to be reviewed and awarded in only 1 year.

“With applications for 11 casino and racino licenses and thousands of video poker licenses expected and no increase in investigative personnel to handle the workload, the inability of the Gaming Board staff to meet the statutory deadlines could be expected to play out again and again, ultimately leading to a broken and corrupt gambling environment in Illinois,” Bilek added.

If signed by the Governor, the Gaming Bill will dilute the authority of the Illinois Gaming Board and set up the organization for a potential conflict with two newly created boards. According to Bilek “the bill creates the Chicago Casino Development Authority and the Illinois State Fairgrounds Racetrack Authority in Springfield, both of which effectively usurp powers of the Illinois Gaming Board, an organization renowned for their ability and integrity.” Bilek said “this move would essentially put the Chicago casino and the Springfield racino in untested and, most likely, politically connected hands.”

“Moreover, the legislation sows the seeds for conflict of interest and political corruption at the Illinois Gaming Board by requiring that the appointment of the agency’s executive director be by the governor and not the Gaming Board, as is currently the case, and further requiring the advise and consent of the Illinois Senate,” Bilek continued.

The new legislation also calls for a perpetual casino license for Chicago, which means that the license could not be revoked even for serious cause by the Gaming Board. “Nowhere in the United States, not in Las Vegas, not in Atlantic City does such a thing as a perpetual gaming casino license exist. It is not needed in Illinois either,” said Bilek.

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“These regulatory shortcomings coupled with the almost unbelievable number of new gambling activities provided by the bill will enable the always ingenious and persistent Crime Syndicate to seek out schemes to enrich itself by getting into the state’s legal gambling business,” added Bilek. “To date, the Crime Syndicate has been kept out of legal gambling in Illinois through the unflinching efforts of the current Illinois Gaming Board,” he said.

Religious leaders asked Governor Quinn to reject this legislation by warning such a massive expansion would have a detrimental effect on their communities. “Gambling’s false promise of quick and easy riches will prey on the economically disadvantaged in our neighborhoods,” according to the Reverend Michael Pflieger, Pastor of St. Sabina Church. “While I understand Illinois requires additional revenue streams, it is unjust to balance the state budget on the backs of those who can afford it the least,” he added.

Those sentiments were echoed by Bishop Ed Peecher, Pastor of New Heritage Cathedral. “I would ask the Governor to think long and hard before he supports this legislation. I have significant concern that entire families will be left penniless because Mom or Dad will be spending their entire paycheck at the casinos,” Peecher said. “This legislation, more than any other in my memory, would change the complexion and perception of the City of Chicago and our community...and not in a positive way,” he continued.

Father Pflieger and Bishop Peecher’s views were reflected in a recent survey conducted by the Chicago Crime Commission. The survey showed that Illinois voters do not support the gambling expansion because they feel it will have a negative impact on the quality of life in the state. Additionally, the survey indicates voters are deeply troubled that if the legislation does pass it does not provide for enough investigators to deal with the issues created by a massive expansion of Illinois gaming.

“For all of these reasons,” Weis said, “the Chicago Crime Commission is asking Governor Quinn not to sign Senate Bill 744.”

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