

# NO FAIRFAX CASINO

TAKE ACTION

## FACT SHEET FOR PARENTS AND EDUCATORS

A bill is likely to be introduced in the Virginia Senate when the General Assembly reconvenes in January 2025 that would authorize a casino along one of the four Metro Line Corridors in Fairfax County

Fairfax County State Senators Marsden and Surovell and the developers and casino operator behind their efforts argue that a casino will mean greater tax revenues for Fairfax and Virginia; more money for education, police and firemen; higher teacher salaries; lower taxes for everyone; and more jobs at a living wage. They assert a casino will not increase crime or traffic and will grow our economy.

One teacher's union –the Fairfax County Federation of Teachers -- is supporting the proposal because it believes that a casino will mean more money for education and teachers' salaries

The reality is that a casino will not grow our economy, will hurt existing local businesses and lead some of them to close, deter desirable new businesses, increase gridlock and public safety problems, lower property values, and encourage risky behaviors. Casino tax revenues will not be sufficient to do everything the two Senators have promised. In fact, for every \$1 in tax revenues provided, we will be saddled with costs of \$3-\$5 or more to mitigate the problems a casino will create. Most importantly for parents and educators, a casino would adversely impact many young people, families and communities throughout Fairfax County.

**Bottom line for parents and educators – a casino is not a good deal for schools, kids or families.**

### SOME FACTS ABOUT THE LIKELY CASINO LOCATION

- The most likely location is Tysons near the intersection of Spring Hill Road and Leesburg Pike. That's the location that the two Senators, casino developers and probable operator have pushed.
- That location is close to 3 elementary schools, 3 private schools, several parks and ball fields, a popular walking trail, a soon-to-be community center, affordable and market rate housing, and houses of prayer.

### PROBLEM GAMBLING – IS ON THE RISE

Compulsive gambling, also called gambling disorder, is the uncontrollable urge to keep gambling despite the toll it takes on your life. With the increase of gambling opportunities, there is a rise of gambling addiction.

- Problem gambling has increased 125% in Virginia since 2019.
- Gambling disorder is impacting people at a younger age – especially young men between 18 and 25.
- Living < 10 miles from a casino increases a person's odds by 90% that they will become a problem gambler.
- The prevalence of problem and pathological gamblers doubles within 50 miles of a casino.

### IMPACTS ON INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

Gambling disorder is typically associated with impaired functioning, reduced quality of life and high rates of bankruptcy, divorce, joblessness and incarceration.

- The impact of problem gambling on people, on their families, on their work, and on their schools is significant.
- One individual who struggles with gambling-related harm negatively impacts eight to ten other individuals.
- Casinos are used by human traffickers to set up and conduct meetings or seek out potential buyers.
- Around gambling facilities, people spend 10% less on food, 25% less on clothing, and that 37% have raided their bank accounts.
- Among problem gamblers, suicide ideation is 31.6% and suicide attempts are 3.6%.

## **IMPACT ON CRIME AND BANKRUPTCY RATES**

Crime and bankruptcy increase in communities hosting casinos.

- Crime in locales hosting casinos has increased about 10% each year/every year.
- 8.6% of property and 12.6 violent crimes in counties with casinos are due to the presence of the casino.
- Counties with gambling have had a bankruptcy filing rate 18% higher than those without.

## **THE REALITY ABOUT REVENUE PROMISES**

Unbiased experts from the Federal Reserve Banks of Richmond and St. Louis, the Urban Institute and pre-eminent academics who do not accept money from either pro- or anti- casino groups have concluded that:

- Despite tax revenues being a major motivator, there is little evidence that casinos boost state taxes.
- Revenues received by state and local governments from taxes paid by casinos are relatively small and a not a stable revenue source for schools (or any other County activity).
- Gaming revenues won't necessarily be earmarked for education. In other states, even when gaming revenues were earmarked for schools, general revenues spent on education declined, leaving overall funding about where it was originally.
- Casinos do not grow economies, boost retail sales, or employment.
- Casinos do not attract new money to an area but instead cannibalize existing businesses, leaving the local economy, at best, no better off than before. Employment has grown at a slower rate in casino economies.
- Over time, gambling decreases the local tax base, as existing businesses struggle, people and businesses move or stay away, property values near the casino decrease, and the economic and social costs of hosting a casino escalate. These effects may, in fact, depress overall County revenues available to fund education.

## **SOME NOTABLE QUOTATIONS FROM THOSE IN THE KNOW**

Former Fairfax County Congressman Frank Wolf in 2024: "My biggest personal concern, however, with having a casino in Fairfax County is what it might do to the fabric of Fairfax County, the Town of Vienna, and surrounding communities. A casino would upend the lives of so many families."

Bishop Michael Burbidge of the Archdiocese of Arlington, VA in 2024: Gambling "has the power to become an addiction that leads to dangerous behavior. Using what is hard-earned money for gambling purposes, and then upon losing that money, you're not able to provide for what you should be using the money for, the care of your family or whatever."

## **TOGETHER WE CAN STOP THE PASSAGE OF A CASINO BILL – WE NEED TO TAKE ACTION NOW!**

The casino advocates are seeking to influence elected officials with large campaign donations and are conducting media campaigns touting economic gains that won't materialize, including for education. Parents and educators can help prevent passage of a casino bill when the Virginia General Assembly reconvenes in 2025 by:

- Sending information to parents and teachers in your school about the harmful effects of a casino.
- Urging your local PTA, the Fairfax County Council of PTAs and the Fairfax Education Association to take a stand against a casino in our County. Also, urging the Fairfax County Federation of Teachers to rethink their position.
- Writing to and arranging meetings with your local and state elected officials to express your concern.

**Sample letters, key email addresses, and more can be found at the No Fairfax Casino Website - <https://nocasinocoalition.org/take-action>. A representative from the No Casino Coalition steering committee will be happy to meet with your group. You can reach us at [nofairfaxcoalition@gmail.com](mailto:nofairfaxcoalition@gmail.com).**