

# WHY VOTE YES TO KEEP PHILADELPHIA NEIGHBORHOODS CASINO-FREE

On May 15th, vote YES on ballot question #1 to prevent current and future casinos from being placed next to schools, homes, and places of worship. It would not stop casinos from coming to Philadelphia – it would merely keep them at least 1,500 feet away from schools, homes, and places of worship.

## Casino slot parlors hurt neighborhoods. They:

- >> Increase crime and require additional police that are needed elsewhere
- >> Do not belong in neighborhoods with their 24/7 free unlimited drinks
- >> Overburden city services with more social problems, including bankruptcy, addictions, and homelessness

## What is being built?

- >> Two 5,000 slot parlors are currently proposed along the waterfront, as close as 100 feet to people's homes.
- >> Each slot parlor will have multiple liquor licenses and be allowed to offer 24/7 free unlimited drinks.
- >> Each slot parlor will add millions of cars along Delaware/Columbus Avenue, a street that regularly backs up already.
- >> They even tried placing a casino right across from a school.

## Good development does not destroy neighborhoods.

## Reason #1: Casino's impact is worse near homes

The two proposed slot parlors are as close as 100 feet from people's homes. Addiction, crime, and all the negative impacts associated with gambling are worse the closer that are near homes and schools.

No casino has ever been built *this* close to urban neighborhoods anywhere in the United States – with good reason. The closer they are the higher the rates of bankruptcy, addiction, and loss of property values. Casinos increase crime by over 80% including rape, prostitution, and gun violence.

All of these are costs to taxpayers across the City. This is a particular problem as Philadelphia's over-stretched police and social services will have to absorb the impact.

VOTE YES on May 15th to put a sensible, minimum standard on how these and future casinos are built in Philadelphia. Casinos should be kept at least 1,500 feet -- about three blocks -- away from people's homes, schools, and places of worship.

## Reason #2: The costs outweigh the benefits

The casino industry likes to talk about the millions they will bring to our City in revenue. **But every dollar they "return to us" will be from our own pockets -- it's merely a payout where most of the money goes to those who own the casino.** At they say: house always wins.

The fact is that each Philadelphian will get nothing in property tax relief and only about \$100 in wage tax.

The casino industry is not a charity. It exists to make money. Why else would they get 10-year tax-free abatements?

The costs when placed so close to homes include paying for extra police, traffic problems, and the loss of small businesses in the area. When you add up the numbers, the costs outweigh the benefits.

ON MAY 15

VOTE IN SUPPORT OF

1500 FT. BETWEEN US AND  THEM

[www.CasinoFreePhila.org](http://www.CasinoFreePhila.org)



## Groups who say vote YES!

**Labor:** American Federation of State County & Municipal Employees's District Council 47's Tom Cronin, President, Local 1723 (Temple U), Coalition of Labor Women, International Longshoremen's Association, Pennsylvania Association of School Nurses & Practitioners, Temple University Hospital Nurses Association

**Businesses:** Cohen & Company Hardware, Inc., Design for Social Impact, Gallery Joe, Gilbert's Upholstery, Homemade Goodies by Roz, Philadelphia Bar & Restaurant Supply, Savory Off South, Scarlett Alley, Shannon FitzPatrick —Appraiser & Gemologist, Snyderman Works Gallery, Wexler Gallery, White Dog Cafe, **Social Service/Community**

**Organizations:** Neighborhood Networks, Philadelphia Riders, Philly for Change, Project H.O.M.E., Southeast Pennsylvania ADA, **Religious Organizations:** Bishop Charles E. Bennison, Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania, Old Pine Street Presbyterian Church, St. Peter's Church in Philadelphia, St. John-Tinicum Lutheran Church, **Civic Associations:** Bella Vista Town Watch, Bella Vista United Civic Association, Center City Residents Association, Delaware River Neighborhood Alliance, East Kensington Neighbors' Association, Fishtown Neighbors Association, Franklin Bridge North Neighbors Association, Hawthorne Empowerment Coalition, Kensington South NAC, Logan Square Neighborhood Association, Neighbors Allied for the Best Riverfront, Northern Liberties Neighbors Association, Old City Civic Association, Passyunk Square Civic Association, Pennsport Civic Association, Port Richmond on Patrol & Civic Association, Rivers Edge Civic Association, Society Hill Civic Association, Queen Village Neighbors Association, Washington Square West Civic Association, Whitman Council, plus numerous city and state political candidates and **tens of thousands of voters...**

## Reason #3: Poor Process led to Poor Plans

The process of bringing casinos to the state has excluded the public. Instead of the nuisance of public discussion, the state legislature called a middle-of-the-night session on July 4th weekend of 2004, introduced undebated riders establishing the casino act and passed them. All without the public.

Since then citizens were kept out of "public meetings," not allowed to speak at hearings, and unable to see the casino's plans for their neighborhoods. **The lack of public input has led to horrible decisions.**

Each casino plans on bringing up 40,000 cars per day into a high-traffic area and further backing up I-95. In order to get to these casinos people will go through small residential streets and increase the traffic backup on both sites.

The casino applications even contain false information about our neighborhoods. For example, the SugarHouse plan says that I-95 acts as a "buffer" between their 5,000 slot parlors and neighborhoods. **They admit a buffer is needed between homes and casinos.**

But that "buffer" does not exist. On the casino's side of I-95 lives over one-hundred residents. Those folks would have to go to sleep with the blinking lights of 24-hour signs in their window. There is no buffer and despite the residents writing letters to ask SugarHouse to correct this problem, they continue to assert this untruth.

The poor plans further include unrealistic traffic plans, lack of minority participation, and even one casino being placed illegally on property that is zoned to exclude that kind of use.

## Reason #4: Quality jobs would suffer

By putting casinos so close to neighborhoods and along the riverfront, we risk harming quality jobs.

Casinos are a selfish businesses – their goal is to keep people in their building as long as possible to keep them betting. That's of course why they offer free buffets and drinks.

As a result, they starve surrounding local restaurants and taverns from business. In Atlantic City, the number of independent restaurants dropped from 48 to 16 just within a year after the casino opening. Within just four years of the casinos' arrival, one-third of the city's retail businesses had closed.

In addition, by building along the riverfront, we risk stopping future port expansion. The Port currently contains over 45,000 direct jobs. Over the next ten years the number of imports is expected to double, but only if the Port can expand. The current casino locations are poorly chosen and would result in the prevention of tens of thousands of new port jobs. **Unlike the casino industry, those jobs would be family-sustaining jobs with benefits, not short-term jobs or low-wage jobs.**

## Vote YES to protect our neighborhoods

Join the thousands of people who have supported a standard that keeps casinos at least 1,500 feet from schools, places of worship, homes, playgrounds and parks. This leaves sites in Philadelphia for these and future casinos to be built away from our homes and schools.

\$100 in property tax is not worth harming the quality of our neighborhoods. It will not cover the social costs of tearing the fabric of our community from increased crime and poverty. Tell the casino industry that Philadelphia has standards. **Vote YES on ballot question #1.**