



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
NEW HAMPSHIRE

www.LWVNH.org

4 Park St Room 200
Concord, NH 03301

April 18, 2017

Re: **SB242 relative to video lottery and table gaming**

Dear Representative Major and members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

Since 1919, the League of Women Voters New Hampshire has been advocating for government laws and policies that benefit the citizens of our state. LWVNH supports legislation only if it fits within stringent guidelines established after intensive study, research and then agreement by our members.

The League opposes SB 242 because it violates basic principles of sound tax policy. The first and foremost criterion for any tax is that it provides a reliable source of revenue. On this point, casino revenue has failed the test in every state that has tried it.

Gambling markets are reaching saturation and the casino industry is in decline. Just like a gambling addict who can't stop chasing losses, or a drug addict who needs a stronger dose to reach the same high, states with budget dependency upon declining casino revenues see little choice but to deepen their dependency and add more locations to gamble.

Jobs are relatively low paying, with many positions paying less than \$10-\$12/hour and many are tip-based and part-time. Casino gambling will cannibalize the businesses in our state, and, unlike our local restaurants, motels, theaters and other businesses depending on our money, the profits from casino gambling will go to out of state and out of country owners. Gaming consultant Clyde Barrow predicts the MGM in Springfield MA, which is more that halfway complete and expected to open in 2018, would cause the loss of 9,300 jobs and \$702 million in revenue to Connecticut's casinos in the first three years. NH's ability to compete for gamblers from out-of-state with the MA casinos coming on line would leave ours at a clear disadvantage.

League supports tax policy based on ability to pay, which is levied on a broad segment of the population, and where appropriate, a tax that is a direct payment for a service or benefit ("user's tax"). Most people do not gamble, and frequently those who do are in a financial bind, hope they will get lucky, and are being misled by sophisticated computer software that is programmed to make them think they "just missed." Computerized gaming programs are specifically designed to affect the brain in the same way other addictive behavior does.

We celebrate the family-friendly recreational opportunities in the state and do not want to add to the increasing chemical and alcohol addiction already identified in the state. Expanded gambling will not provide the opportunities we all want to enable young families to remain and thrive here.

The League of Women Voters NH urges you to vote SB242 **Inexpedient to Legislate.**

Thank you for this opportunity to explain our position re SB242.

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