

# NOGAMBLING in Indiana

# Indiana Coalition Against Legalized Gambling NEWSLETTER

Winter 2009

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## What must change?

By Lorin L. Clemenz  
*new ICALG coordinator*

Our world is in crisis. People are hoping President Obama will be successful in meeting the challenges we are facing. What needs to change if he is to reach his goal? According to Brian D. McLaren's latest book *Everything Must Change*, the implication is that nothing is exempt from the need for change. Is that an exaggeration? I do not think so.

Greed knows no limit. Even the wealthiest have demonstrated that enough is not enough as far as they are concerned. The casinos in Indiana have proven their greed by opposing any expansion of competing casinos. Now the General Assembly is reducing the taxes for one casino and the two racinos (casinos at horse race tracks). Even we consumers have proven our greed as many have amassed debts that have proven disastrous during this deepening recession.

In the midst of all this greed, we have discovered that the revenue from gambling has decreased in Indiana as well as in our country and our world. Casinos are not recession-proof as many have been led to believe. This is complicated, as our state budget has become addicted to gambling revenues. But – as already stated – gambling revenues are significantly down. We have been caught between the proverbial “rock and a hard place.”

The Rev. Gregory L. Enstrom has shared in his article, that Fort Wayne Mayor Thomas Henry is making more and more news with his interest in bringing a casino to the downtown area of the second largest city in Indiana.

At the same time, Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard is expressing interest in a casino to help the Capital Improvement Board raise funds for the financially strapped Lucas Oil Stadium. When do we come to a sense of reality and say, “Enough is enough!”?

The hardest question that we must all answer is: “What changes must we all begin to make?” Other questions that force their way into our concern are:

Where do we see greed grabbing more and more of our thoughts and actions?

Can we begin to see and agree about the common good for the majority?

Can we put others ahead of our own personal interest?



Clemenz

Society needs to rearrange its priorities. Could it be that we will begin to take seriously what we have professed to be our Christian faith? The most exciting time to be alive is right now. The challenges are great, but the opportunities are beyond our wildest dreams. As one of my favorite people, Leonard Sweet, has said, “Don’t make a difference – be a difference!”

# NO CASINO

## Say NO to CasiNO in Fort Wayne

By Gregory L. Enstrom  
*Pastor First UMC, Fort Wayne*

Fort Wayne Mayor Thomas Henry says that he is studying whether a casINO might be a good thing for the city. Yet while he is “studying” the matter, his public statements have lifted up what he sees as potential economic benefits, while at the same time failing to mention any specifics as to the serious social costs.

Area United Methodist pastors began making noise and shouting “red flag” in guest editorials appearing in both *The Journal Gazette* and *The News-Sentinel* in late January and early February. Fort Wayne is known as Indiana’s Three Rivers City – as the St. Joseph and Maumee Rivers converge at the center of the city, becoming the St. Mary’s River. Therefore it was most appropriate that both editorials began with this paraphrase of “Ya Got Trouble” from *The Music Man*:

*Ya got trouble, my friends,  
Right here in River City...  
Trouble with a capital “T”  
And that rhymes with “C”  
And that stands for... “Casino”!*

The Fort Wayne District of The United Methodist Church brought the Rev. Tom Grey, executive director for the Stop Predatory Gambling (formerly the National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling), to Fort Wayne for a press conference and to help mobilize its churches the first week of February. Since

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# ICALG

then, *The Journal Gazette* has taken a position opposed to the casino on its editorial page.

Several church coalitions have now formed to fight the casino.

The mayor's legislative liaison has publicly said that should a casino be approved for Fort Wayne, it will "absolutely" be located downtown. There are more than 20 social service agencies in the downtown providing help to lower economic individuals – those most vulnerable to gambling's addiction – placing them in harm's way.

Fort Wayne has also made considerable headway in its revitalization efforts in the center of the city in the last decade – with many family oriented cultural venues and the soon-to-open Tin Caps Stadium. Proponents maintain that a casino would seriously jeopardize downtown revitalization.

We invite citizens across the state to join us in communicating a clear message to Indiana's General Assembly that it is time to put a stop to predatory gambling.

For more information, contact the Rev. Gregory Enstrom at 260-422-4681.

## Daniels says casino vote in Fort Wayne not 'fruitful'

A referendum to gauge local public opinion on bringing a casino to Fort Wayne would be fairly pointless, Gov. Mitch Daniels said, noting he opposes any expansion of gambling in Indiana.

While visiting the Fort Wayne on March 3, Daniels said he believes there is a saturation of gambling throughout Indiana, a position he has stated before. He said there was no merit to expanding gambling and questioned the value of having a local referendum on the issue. "It doesn't seem like a very fruitful pursuit to me," he said.

Last week Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry called for a city-wide vote on the issue as early as this fall, saying he wanted help making the decision on whether to welcome a casino to town. On March 4, Henry said he understood the governor's position, but said if a casino license comes to Fort Wayne, it wouldn't necessarily be an expansion of legalized gambling.

Henry said if an existing casino was in trouble and wanted to move, it could transfer the license to Fort Wayne without adding anything new. — *The Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*

## Stop Predatory Gambling

Guest Commentary

By John Wolf

The National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling (NCALG) has changed its name to "STOP PREDATORY GAMBLING". The new name captures its purpose.

The NCALG purpose has never been the "prohibition" of all gambling. Legalized gambling has expanded in the past 20 years until a new generation cannot remember the time when the 1850 Indiana Constitution prohibited all forms of gambling.

Predatory gambling is not a friendly neighborhood game of poker on Friday nights. Predatory gambling is the government sponsored practice of using gambling to prey upon human weakness. It is the government's version of sub-prime lending. According to the Consumer Federation of America, one of five Americans think the best way to save for retirement is to play the lottery. The best way used to be hard work, saving, education and skill.

In the meltdown of Wall Street, AIG and Lehman Brothers were part of what was called "Casino Capitalism." They used financial gimmicks and predatory practices to seduce unsuspecting Americans to view their home and stock investments with illusions. Some call it "mirage capitalism". This illusion, promoted by government, has led "to marriages broken, consumer debt, bankruptcies and white collar crime," according to an editor of *The Indianapolis Star*.

Disillusion with predatory gambling has taken a downturn as casinos are laying off workers. Once thought to be "recession-proof," according to Steve Norton, a New Jersey gambling promoter, "The casinos are subject to the same business cycles as other industries."

Las Vegas laid off 600 union employees. At last month's Conference of Casinos Executives in Las Vegas, Gary Loveman, CEO of Harrah's, said "One of the challenges that has plagued the casino industry for a long time is that we spend money like drunken sailors." We can see this by all the expansion of casinos on Lake Michigan and the Ohio River.

Presently, Mayor Thomas Henry of Fort Wayne has "put out the welcome mat for gambling," according to the Associated Press. He might want to consider that casino proposals were defeated in Ohio and Maine in the lastest elections.

Pulitzer Prize winning historian, Taylor Branch, brought the wisdom of Martin Luther King, Jr. to bear on predatory gambling, "The first rule of the American experience is that we don't play each other for suckers. The government shouldn't play its own citizens for suckers."

Well said! Perhaps its time to stop predatory gambling. ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

## Downtown Indy casino scenario

*Editorial thoughts from The Indianapolis Star – Feb. 27, 2009*

Don't place any bets on it, but Indianapolis might be the next victim of the state's addiction to gambling.

Here's an unlikely but plausible scenario that could unfold as the General Assembly's current session marches toward a frantic finish:

Legislative leaders look for a way to plug the deficit plaguing the city's Capital Improvement Board, which operates Lucas Oil Stadium, Consecro Fieldhouse and other venues.

Casino owners in Anderson and Shelbyville offer to give back some of their slot machines to create a casino in Union Station. It might hurt their revenues at the horse tracks in Madison and Shelby counties, but they would still gain a foothold in the state's largest city. The city in turn would get a stream of revenue to pay for the stadium deficit. Union Station also would gain a new lease on life.

Fortunately, the odds are against this scenario.

Mayor Greg Ballard isn't enthusiastic about it. "We've had some educational discussions," he said in a Star Editorial Board meeting this week when asked about a Downtown casino. "The ball is not very far down the road."

Public Safety Director Scott Newman shot down the idea on grounds of economic development. "On its merits, it doesn't stand up," he said. "It's not a way to economically develop the city."

Gov. Mitch Daniels also says he doesn't want more gambling facilities.

House Minority Leader Brian Bosma, an Indianapolis Republican, has been a vocal opponent of a casino.

An Indianapolis casino would also instigate a huge fight in the General Assembly, pitting the city against the rest of the state.