

A voice from Pennsylvania

The controversy over expanded gambling is a “déjà vu” for me. If Kentuckians think this will be beneficial, they should look more closely at Pennsylvania.

Eight months ago I relocated to Lexington after living in Central Pennsylvania for 31 years. In 2006 slot machines were introduced at racetracks. The rationale was to help the horse industry and create jobs and tax relief.

Now, free-standing casinos with names like “Harrah’s” eclipse the racetracks. Penn National Racetrack sits in disrepair behind glamorous Hollywood Casino. Citizens have received no substantive tax relief and government is now saddled with a new bureaucracy, the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board, which has already been reprimanded by a grand jury.

Communities deal with increased transient traffic flow and associated municipal expenses. Jobs created for locals are mostly entry-level jobs. The only upper-level employees I met were relocated from Las Vegas. I know of no former neighbor who believes a casino 15 minutes from our homes has been beneficial.

Consider Pennsylvania’s neighbor to the east, Atlantic City. After four decades of gambling, it is a city of extremes: wealthy casinos and poverty stricken neighborhoods.

Once casinos are well established and their political influence has grown even stronger, will they willingly contribute to the horse industry? Pennsylvania, Maryland and Indiana have already had bills introduced to begin lowering the amount of support the horse industry receives.

Expanded gambling will ultimately marginalize Kentucky’s beloved equestrian traditions, hurt our communities and the poor, and increase government expenses and corruption.

A recent Pennsylvania transplant to Kentucky



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