



UMC ADVOCACY TEAM -- JANUARY 2018 (1-7)

SPORTS GAMBLING – OPPOSED

SUMMARY OF POSITION: We are strongly opposed to sports gambling being legalized in Iowa whether it is restricted to existing casinos or allowed on the internet, and whether it is restricted to professional sports or is allowed for college sports. There are already 19 casinos in the state of Iowa. We are over saturated with opportunities to gamble.

We believe gambling is a detriment to society by re-enforcing the value of luck being the determinant of one's place in life, rather than education, hard work, and perseverance. The latter are Iowa values which should be championed. Gambling is a menace to personal character and social morality. Sports Gambling attracts the young and naïve of our communities, creating gambling addicts when our young people's brains are still under-developed and susceptible to its deceptions. A new form of gambling is harmful and counter-productive to the culture and economy we want to affirm.

UNITED METHODIST OFFICIAL STATEMENTS

Gambling fosters greed and stimulates the fatalistic faith in chance. . . It encourages the belief that work is unimportant, that money can solve all our problems, and that greed is the norm for achievement. It serves as a "regressive tax" on those with lower income. (2016 *The Book of Resolutions*, #4041, p. 424)

Gambling is a menace to society, deadly to the best interests of moral, social, economic, and spiritual life, destructive of good government and good stewardship." (The Social Principles, The Economic Community G) Gambling, page 412, *The 2016 Book of Resolutions*)

The Iowa Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, urges members of the Iowa General Assembly and Boards of County Supervisors to resist further attempts to expand any gambling activities. . . in Iowa. (*The 2017 Iowa Book of Resolutions*, p. 34)

SUPPORTING FACTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

1. Sports gambling is currently prohibited in all but four states by the 1992 federal law "Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act." The current law protects sports by keeping them free of the taint of wholesale gambling on all college and professional sports. Athletes would be tempted by gamblers to throw games for payoffs.
2. Sports betting would likely be available online and this type of gambling has greater addictive potential for younger Iowans, according to Tom Coates of Bets Off. (Des Moines Register, 1/3/18)

3. Casinos argue that sports betting is going on illegally anyway, so let's legalize it. "Legalizing gambling does not reduce illegal gambling... may even increase illegal gambling." (Abt, Vickie. Cited by Florida Office of Planning and Budgeting.)
4. Gambling brings addiction; Gambling doubles bankruptcy; Gambling increases crime; Gambling costs the economy. (National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling, www.ncalg.org)
5. There have been many new studies on the brain development of young adults. Most conclude the adult maturity where the brain is functioning like it will for the rest of one's life does not happen for most young adults until the mid-twenties. One result of this, according to Dr. © A. Rae Simpson 2008 rsimpson@mit.edu of MIT "Teens also show a heightened desire for emotional intensity, and for the thrills, excitement, adventures, and risk-taking that are likely to generate high emotion. The ability to regulate such emotions effectively does not typically come until young adulthood, so there is often a gap of several years between the onset of the "accelerator" and the development of effective "brakes." If gambling is a type of risk-taking, it may be difficult to control among young adults 18-25.
6. Gambling costs even for those who never gamble! Each compulsive gambler costs the economy between \$14,006 and \$22,077 per year. (Grinols, Earl. "Cutting the Cards and Craps: right thinking about gambling economics," p. 14 (cited in National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling)
7. Jesus said: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31b NRSV). In relating with compassion and love to our sisters and rothers, we are called to resist those practices and systems that exploit them and leave them impoverished and demeaned." (2016 Book of Resolutions, #4041 Gambling. P. 422)

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