



## Christian Coalition

January 16, 1995

Dear Fellow Virginian:

Can you imagine a large neon-lit casino built in your community or town? Or how about a riverboat casino anchored in Virginia Beach, in 1607, where the first European settlers landed, planted a cross in the sand, and dedicated this land to the glory of God? Sound alarming? . . . read on.

When the General Assembly convened its 1995 session last week, another attempted assault on the family began. Out-of-state commercial interests want to "open up" Virginia to casino gambling. They failed narrowly last year -- by a 42-55 vote in the House of Delegates -- but they're back! And they spent about \$17 million in Florida last year to "open up" that state to their style of legalized gambling even though a study showed associated crime and social costs would increase over \$2 billion annually.

Some in Virginia believe they have found the latest in a long line of panaceas for our state's economic woes. The liberal politicians who brought us the state lottery and para-mutual betting now want us to swallow casino gambling as the answer to Virginia's financial and employment problems.

These liberals would have us believe that gambling would be a financial windfall. What they do not tell us is that the increased negative effects of gambling would destroy our neighborhoods and pollute our coastline. Have you heard about Atlantic City lately? It's merely a shadow of its former beauty, plagued by drugs, crime, and all the attendant woes of gambling.

Casinos not only would attract organized crime to Virginia but also would greatly reduce the stigma associated with gambling. This would make gambling more attractive to our youth, thus encouraging this behavior.

Gambling actually would present a long-term economic loss to Virginia regardless of any supposed short-term benefit. Small businesses have no desire to exist in a community rampant with crime, illicit drug sales and prostitution, all of which would be attracted by the casino atmosphere. Also, rehabilitative treatment for compulsive gamblers, and increased police and incarceration costs due to the crime element, will add to the taxpayer burden, not relieve it. Finally, much disposable income would support casino gambling rather than local small businesses.