

## Presbyterians and Gambling in Delaware

This past Sunday's state-wide newspaper had the lead headline "[Del. paves way for gambling mecca.](#)"

*Sunday News Journal* reported "Widely viewed as a long shot in April, the recent step toward

legalization of casino table games appears ready to launch Delaware into big-time gambling, including a strong push to expand it beyond horse-racing tracks. Delaware needs to fill a nearly \$800 million hole in next year's budget. Sports betting promised some help. Table games, somewhat more. But officials acknowledge the real money will come only from approving more casinos... Delaware law now allows slot machines and gambling only at the state's three racetracks." [The Presbyterian Church \(U.S.A.\)](#) has a long history of opposition to all forms of gambling as an abdication of stewardship. A 1950 statement described gambling as "an unchristian attempt to get something for nothing or at another's expense." Twenty-five years later, a Presbyterian General Assembly adopted a statement calling upon its members "to exert influence on local, state and national legislative bodies to oppose all forms of legalized gambling, e.g., lotteries, bingo, pari-mutuel betting, dog racing, horse racing, betting on sports games, casino games and numbers." [United Methodist Bishop Peggy Johnson](#) of the Peninsula-Delaware Annual Conference, recently wrote in the *News Journal*, "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. As an act of faith and concern, Christians should abstain from gambling and should strive to minister to those victimized by the practice. The church's prophetic call is to promote standards of justice and advocacy that would make it unnecessary and undesirable to commercial gambling as a means of producing public revenue or funds for support of charities or government." Beyond moral objections, Gambling is simply bad social policy: "Authoritative research shows just how harmful a new gambling facility can be in the surrounding area: The number of new addicted gamblers doubles over the course of five years; there is an 18 to 42 percent increase in personal, professional, and business bankruptcies; and crime increases (by about 10 percent each year). For the past 15 years, academic reports have also concluded that the socioeconomic costs to tax-payers and local governments are at least \$3 for every \$1 in benefits" according to John Warren Kindt, an editor and contributing author to the multivolume *United States International Gambling Report*, in a recent [Christian Science Monitor](#) column. **Please share this article and with others and contact your state representatives and express your opposition to more gambling in Delaware.** This article is by [Pastor Bruce Gillette](#) of the Limestone Presbyterian Church; he served as a pastor near Atlantic City for ten years and saw the impact of gambling in that region.



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