



**Virginia Faith & Freedom Coalition, Inc.**

**PO Box 404**

**Herndon, Virginia 20170**

[\*\*www.VAFFC.com\*\*](http://www.VAFFC.com)

## **Members of the Virginia General Assembly**

Dear Members of the Virginia General Assembly,

On behalf of the signed pastors, faith leaders, and supporters of the Virginia Faith & Freedom Coalition, we are writing to urge you to consider the horrific moral consequences of the proposed casino project in Tysons. This casino will have severe negative impacts on our local communities, especially considering its proximity to schools, houses, and the burdens it would place on families in Northern Virginia.

While we are deeply concerned about the specific proposal in Tysons, we also wish to express our broader opposition to the expansion of casino operations across Virginia, particularly in Northern Virginia.

As Christians we understand that casinos directly appeal to covetousness and greed. And for those that may not adhere to our same beliefs, we encourage you to read the numerous studies that show the long-term costs of promoting gambling far outweigh any short-term economic benefits. The promise of jobs and revenue from casinos is fleeting, but the social costs—ranging from family breakdowns to financial ruin, public health issues and drunk driving —are long-lasting. Virginia's communities deserve better than to be further commodified by the predatory gambling industry.

The Council of Casinos, a group founded to educate the public on the negative effects of Casino gambling, put out a report in 2013 that found:

1. Casinos target the poor.
2. Casinos prey upon patrons enslaved by the unjust compulsion of addiction.
3. Slot machines are rigged against gamblers.
4. State governments and private casinos conspire against communities.

The study looked at 300 Metropolitan Statistical Areas and found that the presence of a casino reduces volunteerism, civic participation, family stability, and other forms of social capital within 15 miles of a community where it is located. Another study of members of Gamblers Anonymous found that upwards of 26 percent have gambling-related divorces or separations.

The American Psychiatric Association classifies problem gambling as a “substance related and Addictive Disorder” which re-wires the prefrontal cortex of the brain. While problem gambling is treatable through medication and other forms of mental health treatments, almost 90% of problem gamblers never seek help. In Virginia the problem gambling hotline has increased almost 150% in the past few years. Localities with casinos have reportedly spiked 788% according to Axios Richmond.

Casinos are well documented places of human trafficking. Traffickers often seek to set up shop in casino hotels to facilitate prostitution. Normal casino hotel activity, with hundreds of people arriving and leaving the facility on a 24/7 basis and making trips to and from the hotel provides the perfect environment and client base for the sex trafficking. Given the well-documented and ongoing human trafficking problem in Tysons, state and local officials should focus their energy on tackling that problem before ever considering a casino that will exacerbate the problem.

We ask that you consider the moral, social, and economic impact of this proposal and reject the idea of allowing a casino to be built in Tysons. We urge you to uphold the values that make our communities strong—values of integrity, family, and responsibility—and to resist the temptation to prioritize short-term profits over the long-term health of our state. Thank you for your time and consideration. We trust you will make the right decision for the people of Virginia, especially the families in Northern Virginia who will bear the brunt of this Project.

Sincerely,

Pastor Will Archer

Lead Pastor

Potomac Valley Church

Caleb Max

Board Member

VAFFC

John Rubino

Nativity Catholic Church

Burke, Virginia

Tim Parrish

Board Member

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Ron Wright

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Pastor Steven Mosley

Chair

Fairfax GOP Evangelical Outreach

Dr. Bob Griffith

Lead Pastor

Christ Chapel

Pastor Stevie Burke

Senior Pastor

Christian Life Church

Pastor Lawrence Hubb

Lead Pastor

The Greater Fellowship Inc.

Minister Ronald Tibbs  
Calling the Church  
to Unity Ministries

Minister Carla Tibbs  
Calling the Church  
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Chaplin Raymond Perez  
Good News Jail and  
Prison Ministries

Pastor Johnny Clements  
Senior Pastor  
One Word Community  
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Pastor Brad Lewis  
Lead Pastor  
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Pastor Eugene C. McCown, Jr.  
Lead Pastor  
Praise Center Church of God in Christ

Pastor Rick Stigile  
Senior Pastor  
Real Life Church