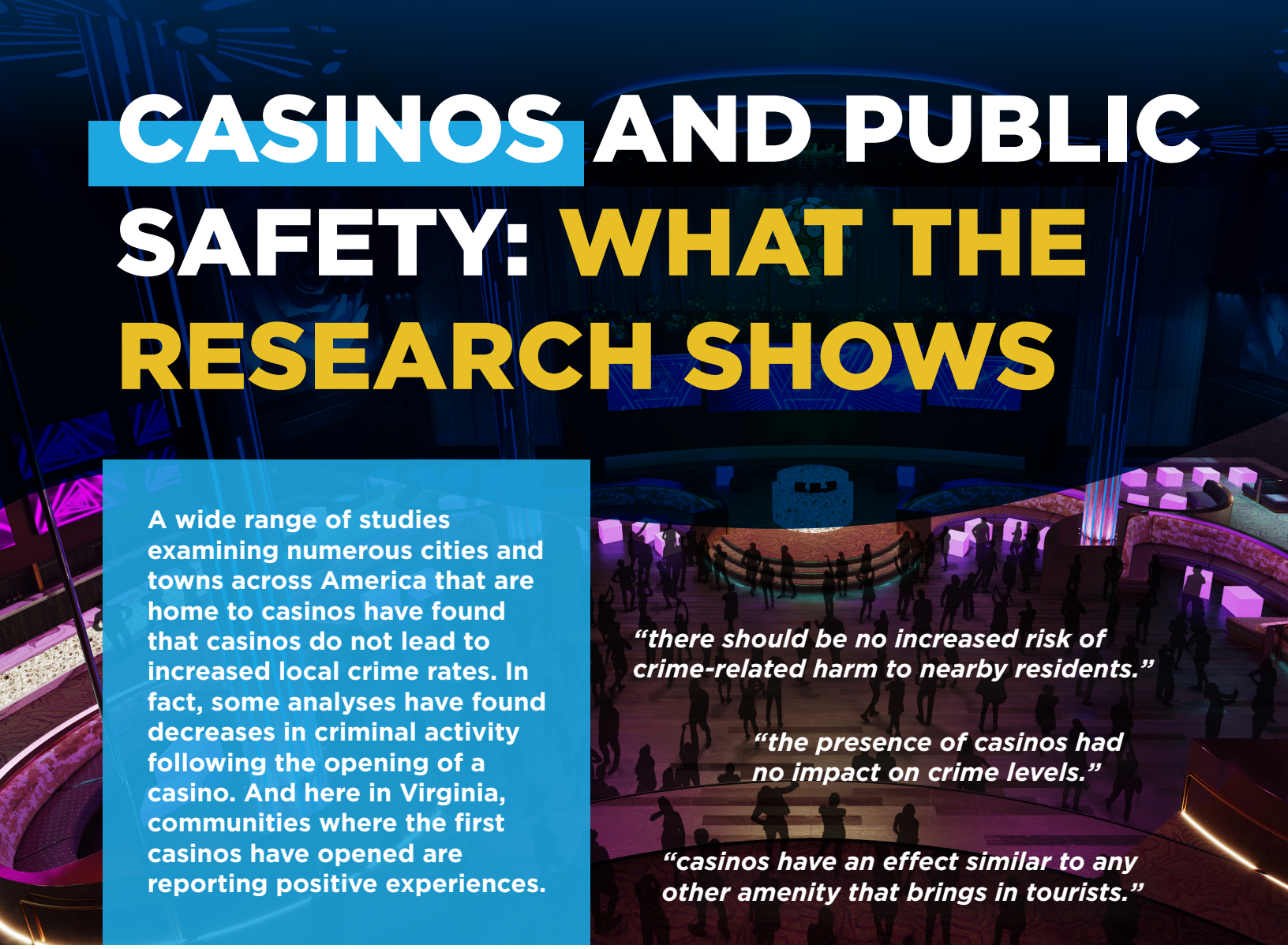
CASINOS AND PUBLIC SAFETY: WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS

A wide range of studies examining numerous cities and towns across America that are home to casinos have found that casinos do not lead to increased local crime rates. In fact, some analyses have found decreases in criminal activity following the opening of a casino. And here in Virginia, communities where the first casinos have opened are reporting positive experiences.



"there should be no increased risk of crime-related harm to nearby residents."

"the presence of casinos had no impact on crime levels."

"casinos have an effect similar to any other amenity that brings in tourists."

1

A study by the University of Nevada Las Vegas examined a wide range of published academic research on the effects, if any, of casino gaming on crime to identify key trends and common conclusions in the literature. The UNLV review found the research showed "there should be no increased risk of crime-related harm to nearby residents" due to casinos, and casinos had "an insignificant effect on the crime rates overall" in the communities where they were located. Overall, "casinos have an effect similar to any other amenity that brings in tourists, which is a key point that is consistent among these studies," the UNLV authors wrote.

2

A study by criminal justice researchers at the University of Nevada Reno found the stereotype that "casinos generate crime" was unjustified and wrote that their "analysis is yet another empirical verification that casinos venues may not be all that different from non-casino environs in terms of crime prevalence and patterns."

There have been no issues with crime at Virginia's very first casino gaming site, which is the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino facility located in Bristol, according to city officials there. In fact, "it's just been a very overall successful first year," Bristol's mayor recently reported, with substantial new local tax revenue, 600 new jobs created and another 600 jobs expected to be added this coming year when the casino moves into its new permanent home.

(Cardinal News, 7/7/2023)

In the five years since a casino opened in Springfield, MA—a medium sized city like Richmond—"crime has stayed low" in the surrounding neighborhood, the local newspaper reported. A study commissioned by the Massachusetts Gaming Commission found, "there is so far no sign that the presence of the [Springfield MGM] casino has increased crime or calls to service at hotels, restaurants, bars, and gas stations … nor has it increased activity specifically within the radiuses of highway exits to and from the facility." And Springfield's police chief has said, "there is also no evidence that the casino has directly or indirectly pushed any type of crime into other neighborhoods in our city."

(MassLive.com, 8/22/2023)

Before giving a green light to the Caesars Virginia casino resort, which just opened in Danville, city leaders did their homework by checking on public safety in other communities that already hosted casinos.

"We spoke to mayors and police chiefs about the impact of crime related to the casino[s] in their communities," Danville's city manager has said. "Their response was that any additional crime was attributed to more people visiting their communities and would likely be similar to any other large-scale development. All said, the benefits of investments, jobs and new tax revenue greatly outweighed any negative consequences."

(Virginia Business, 9/28/2020)

3

A study by scholars in the US and South Korea found "the analysis of crime rates…shows that the presence of casinos had no impact on crime levels." Additionally, their work "finds no significant negative changes in unemployment, bankruptcy, or crime rates after casinos opened."

4

A study by Convergence Strategy Group examined FBI crime data for a representative mix of 14 communities nationwide where casinos exist and conducted interviews with public safety officials. Per the CSG authors, "the data show the crime has declined in casino communities after casino development, and the crime rate per capita (when including visitors) in casino areas generally falls after casino development."

5

A study on behalf of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission examined public safety data for the several communities surrounding that state's first casino. The study found that, "[i]n aggregate, the six contributing communities have seen a significant net reduction in total crime and property crime since Plainridge Park opened. With a couple of exceptions, profit-motivated crimes like theft, burglary, and robbery have been average or low. Police have also not reported increases in vice-related crimes like drugs, liquor, and general disorder."

6

A study by a West Virginia University professor analyzed the link between new casinos and crime rates by examining what happened in Indiana after that state legalized casino gaming. The author found that "[t]he results suggest, moreover, that increasing casino activity, in this case the turnstile count of casino patrons, leads to reductions in local crime rates….These results suggest that for some crime categories, new casinos may actually reduce local crime rates."

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