



BISHOPS URGE “NO” VOTE ON AMENDMENT 4

2004 Slot Machine Amendment to the Florida Constitution

We express our opposition to the current efforts to amend the state constitution so as to allow gambling by slot machines in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties.

The teaching of the Catholic Church on the morality of gambling is clear. People are entitled to dispose of their own property as they will, so long as in doing so they do not render themselves incapable of fulfilling duties expected by reason of justice or charity. Gambling, therefore, though a luxury, is not considered morally wrong in itself, but it may become morally wrong when it interferes with one's other duties or responsibilities.

Gambling, according to Catholic tradition, is morally neutral depending on the individual circumstances. We speak here, not only out of a sense of our responsibility as religious leaders, but also out of our concern as citizens of Florida for the long-range implications which these proposals will have for the quality of life of all of the citizens of our state.

Gambling is often accompanied by vice and social evils. We are concerned over the impact of easier gambling opportunities on low and moderate income families and individuals, as well as those for whom gambling becomes a compulsive behavior. We are also concerned for the impact on neighborhoods, housing patterns and the homeless, and on public morality in general.

In view of the potential harm to the common good of all citizens of our state, we urge a “no” vote on Amendment 4.

Archbishop John C. Favalora
Archdiocese of Miami

Bishop John J. Nevins
Diocese of Venice

Bishop Norbert M. Dorsey, CP
Diocese of Orlando

Bishop John H. Ricard, SSJ
Diocese of Pensacola/Tallahassee

Bishop Robert N. Lynch
Diocese of St. Petersburg

Bishop Victor Galeone
Diocese of St. Augustine

Bishop Gerald M. Barbarito, JCL
Diocese of Palm Beach

Coadjutor Bishop Thomas G. Wenski
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