

# ON THE EXPANSION OF GAMBLING

In November of 2019 at the annual meeting of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, the Resolution on Gambling passed, voicing our collective opposition to the expansion of gambling in the Commonwealth. As Southern Baptist churches, we enjoy the privilege of autonomy, yet because our churches are to uphold biblical principles and doctrinal unity, I encourage our churches to do the same by opposing House Bill 137 on the Expansion of Gambling.

Why is this issue important?

House Bill 137, introduced by Rep. Adam Koenig (R-Louisville), would expand gambling in Kentucky to include sports betting. The bill passed 18-0 in committee and now is heading to the Senate. Governor Andy Beshear says that this will “create new revenue” for our state by retaining money that is going across the borders to Indiana, Ohio and Illinois. He, and Rep. Koenig, believe that over \$500 million would remain in Kentucky as a result, so the reality is that the expansion of gambling in Kentucky is about economic competition. I understand that.

But what new expenses will be incurred as a result of the destruction gambling will leave in its path? Gambling is not the constructive solution to financial freedom it is purported to be, but rather a destructive force to families, finances and faith. The [American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual](#) includes gambling disorder as a diagnosis, citing the “significant problems and distress” it causes. A June 2018 article by [Medical News Today](#) states, “Problem gambling is harmful to psychological and physical health. People who live with this addiction may experience depression, migraine, distress, intestinal disorders, and other anxiety-related problems.” Moreover, the [Australian Gambling Research Centre](#) published a 2014 article citing the effects of gambling, including damage to intimate relations between spouses and children, emotional and financial difficulties, domestic violence, and creating a generational cycle of gambling addiction.

Consider how much the Commonwealth of Kentucky will expend in addressing these issues. Spiritually, financially, and even economically, it is a ticking time bomb, ready to explode, and the shrapnel will embed in unintended targets and create a myriad of additional issues that will demand attention for generations to come.

My conclusion is this: The expansion of gambling is not spiritually, morally, socially, or economically responsible. So please, for the true future of Kentucky, oppose House Bill 137 by contacting your legislator. If you do not know who your legislator is, call 1-800-372-7181. And be certain to pray for these men and women to invoke godly counsel.

For His Glory,

Dr. Brian Horton