



## Gambling

### Position Statement

Adopted: 10/5/76  
Revised: 10/19/82, 10/27/87,  
10/30/00

Because of deep concern for family life and social values, the Montana Association of Churches:

- Urges the Montana Legislature to study the social costs associated with gambling.
- Opposes any attempt to expand authorized gambling.
- Calls for the repeal of laws authorizing electronic gambling machines and devices in Montana.
- Supports strict governmental control of all gambling enterprises in Montana.
- Calls for a repeal of the state or multi-state sponsored lotteries.

### Supporting Statement

In spite of the defeat of initiatives supporting expanded gambling, the Montana Legislature has continued to expand authorized gambling in Montana. The Montana Association of Churches has consistently opposed bills to authorize electronic gambling machines, and now calls for legislation to prohibit them.

The Montana Association of Churches is concerned about the expansion of gambling in Montana because of its social cost. Since Montana licenses electronic poker machines and authorizes several other forms of gambling, the State has the responsibility to look not only at the immediate financial benefits, but at the social costs as well. The State has the obligation to consider the results of its policies, determine the social costs, hold them up to public scrutiny and take actions to prevent or mitigate the effects of those policies.

The human suffering that has resulted from the increase in gambling in Montana is reflected by the establishment of Gamblers Anonymous groups. Montanans have also begun seeking treatment for compulsive gambling in alcohol and drug dependency programs. Commercial gambling poses a serious threat to any social order. Non-productive in nature, gambling provides no essential services to a community. It undermines economic and social order, places an added strain on the family structure, potentially corrupts government at all levels, and creates the potential for many related crime and law enforcement problems.

*Montana Association of Churches: Uniting by the power of God's Word  
for witness and worship, justice and service.*

STATE JUDICIARY

Exhibit No. 6

Date

1-7-05

SB 103

Montana Association of Churches  
American Baptist Churches of the Northwest \* Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) in Montana  
Episcopal Church Diocese of Montana \* Evangelical Lutheran Church in America-Montana Synod  
Presbyterian Church (USA)-Glacier Presbytery \* Presbyterian Church (USA)-Yellowstone Presbytery  
Roman Catholic Diocese of Great Falls-Billings \* Roman Catholic Diocese of Helena  
United Church of Christ of MT-Northern WYO. Conference \* United Methodist Church Yellowstone Conference