

Explanation of Vote

Kansas Lottery Commission and Kansas Racing and Gaming Commission

While I oppose gambling and its adverse affects on the Kansas economy and its citizens, I voted to pass this budget out of committee because I feel it necessary to fund and ensure all forms of gambling are held in check. It is very unfortunate that since the passage of SB 66 "the Expanded Lottery Act Bill" in 2007 our regulators have been forced into an inherent conflict of interest. I am greatly concerned that Kansas is the only State in the Union to own and operate gambling establishments. Instead of State agencies being in a position to protect the public, the State is now a partner who has the potential of profiting from the abuses casinos, animal races, and other forms of gambling are so well known for. How does the State hold itself and its partners accountable when relationships are enmeshed and traditional boundaries have become blurred or non-existent? It is therefore all the more important that legislators be vigilant and holds our state agencies accountable to ensure all forms of gambling are held to the highest standards possible and that all transactions be above reproach. I am encouraged about improvements to previous year's Legislative Post Audits that reported the Lottery's internal controls are materially weak or show significant deficiency and may not prevent or detect fraud. While improvements have been made, I join a host of Representatives who voiced their opposition, when called to vote on SB 66, stating among other things that gambling will damage our economy, prey upon the elderly, and will increase crime, poverty, broken homes, bankruptcies and job losses. The State of Kansas should be doing all it can to not just regulate the practice, but find ways to eradicate it.

Respectfully,

Pete DeGraaf