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## Lottery advocates, opponents to face off again in Nevada Legislature

Advocates of a lottery in the nation's No. 1 gambling state have faced a long run of bad luck in getting Nevada legislators to back the idea — but they're betting the time is right for one more attempt.

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CARSON CITY, Nev. —

Advocates of a lottery in the nation's No. 1 gambling state have faced a long run of bad luck in getting Nevada legislators to back the idea — but they're betting the time is right for one more attempt.

Among the 200-odd bills and resolutions introduced by a Monday deadline was AJR7, sponsored chiefly by freshman Assemblyman Paul Aizley, D-Las Vegas, to remove a prohibition against lotteries that's now part of the Nevada Constitution. His list of 22 co-signers includes many legislative veterans, among them Assembly Speaker Barbara Buckley, D-Las Vegas.

Similar proposals have been rejected by the Legislature more than two dozen times since 1970, although in 1990 Nevadans did vote to allow charitable and religious organizations to hold small lotteries as fund-raisers.

If the latest proposal wins approval from lawmakers this session, they'd have to endorse it again in the 2011 session and then let voters have final say in the 2012 elections.

Proponents have argued that a majority of Nevadans support lotteries, and that the state's cut of money generated by lotteries could be used for public schools or other state programs in need of funding.

But opponents from casino companies, in part fearing more competition, have maintained that lotteries don't create the investment and jobs that casinos do. They also argued that amending the Nevada Constitution to allow a lottery would produce a regressive tax on the poor, who tend to spend a higher proportion of their income on lotteries.

When the idea came up during the 2007 session, proponents argued unsuccessfully that a lottery could generate up to \$200 million for the state. But lawmakers also got a gambling industry report estimating a lottery would pull in \$51 million in profits for the state, but those gains would be offset by a net loss of jobs.

Lotteries are operated in all but eight states now, and experts on such games estimate that Americans spent \$57 billion on lottery tickets in 2006 alone — with no more than 2 percent of any of the ticket sales going into any state's coffers. The rest of the money went to pay for prizes and other expenses.

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