

WJCT- Jacksonville Public Radio

Politics

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Final Senate Gambling Workshop Set For Tomorrow In Jacksonville

By [Cyd Hoskinson](#)

First Coast residents will get a chance to weigh in on the future of gambling in Florida tomorrow.

The Florida State Senate Committee on Gaming is touring the state to gather opinions on gambling and [the results of a recently completed gaming study](#) commissioned by the state legislature.

So far, at least 40 people have signed up to speak at the committee's 4th and final public hearing tomorrow in Jacksonville.

Among them is Les Bernal, national director of the Washington-based group Stop Predatory Gambling.

Bernal said the biggest reason to stop more casinos from setting up shop in Florida is the heavy personal toll they take on customers.

"People will become addicted. People where commercial gambling has taken over their lives. That's the business model. It's not just this casual thing where people go once," he said.

"If it was just these folks going casually, casinos would go out of business. It's the out-of-control frequent player where these guys make their money."

The Senate Gaming Committee is charged with reviewing current gambling statutes to find and fix any discrepancies.

Friday's [public hearing](#) will be held from 2-5 p.m. at Florida State College at Jacksonville's downtown campus.