



## **Resolution Against the Proposed Rockingham Mall Casino**

WHEREAS, a major casino operator Cordish Companies, which runs the “Live!” casino brand in several different locations across the United States, has filed a proposal to build a large casino with 1,340 gambling positions at the Rockingham Mall in Salem, NH located right on the Massachusetts border; and

WHEREAS, the traffic study submitted to the Salem Planning Board and paid for by the casino company itself acknowledged that **77% of the market demographic for this casino will be coming from “to/from points south” (Pg. 243) and the people of Lawrence are a primary target;** and

WHEREAS, the proposed casino at the Mall would only be between a 10-to-15 minute car ride from the homes of nearly all Lawrence residents; and

WHEREAS, many Lawrence businesses will experience significant negative economic impacts from a casino such a short distance away: a recent **UMASS-Amherst report** prepared for the Massachusetts Gambling Commission declared “[casinos] have had a negative impact for other businesses in terms of where leisure dollars are being spent,” finding that **“between 46% and 80% of casino patrons reported spending less on other goods and services, particularly in restaurants and bars.”**

WHEREAS, a local casino helps criminal operations like fentanyl trafficking and human sex trafficking thrive because of the massive **money laundering** opportunities it presents; and

WHEREAS, major women’s advocacy groups like the National Organization for Women (NOW) have **highlighted** the link between casinos and human sex trafficking for reasons that include sex-trafficking victims **have reported** using a casino floor as a place to meet buyers they have been set up with online and as a place to solicit prospective buyers; and

WHEREAS, with a population of nearly 90,000 people, Lawrence is one of the poorest cities in the United States, and is the poorest in Massachusetts; and

WHEREAS, the people of Lawrence have a median **household income** of \$54,000 a year and 1 out of 5 residents live below the poverty line; and

WHEREAS, of children under age 18 in Lawrence, 28 percent **live in households** below the poverty line, as do 28 percent of people **age 65 and older;** and

WHEREAS, the combination of economic poverty and an expensive housing market leaves many people in Lawrence without enough money to access the basic necessities of life; and

WHEREAS, the business model for the proposed Rockingham Mall casino **relies heavily on targeting the financial desperation** of Lawrence’s low-income workers, elderly, and disabled, many of whom will be lured with free bets and other incentives to drive to the casino *four to five times a week*; and

WHEREAS, hardcore commercialized gambling like electronic gambling machines, the kind of gambling proposed for the Mall, is **recognized** as an addiction *on the same level as heroin, cocaine, and opioids* in the American Psychiatric Association’s DSM V which is used by health care providers and insurers as the principal source for mental health diagnoses; and

WHEREAS, because electronic gambling machines are so dangerously addictive for the local population, the same **UMASS-Amherst report** referenced earlier found that **the percentage of casino revenues extracted from gambling-addicted citizens and those at-risk for addiction was 90%: a business model based on addiction**; and

WHEREAS, this life-changing addiction causes the kind of human misery like very few things can including significant **increases** in rates of personal bankruptcy, divorce, domestic violence and, gambling addiction has the highest rate of suicide of any addiction; and,

WHEREAS, there are several other alternatives that already exist for adults who want to access hardcore forms of gambling at a large casino, but they are further away and less of an immediate threat to Lawrence’s residents and businesses; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, We, the members of the Lawrence City Council, urge the members of the Salem Town Council and Salem Planning Board to oppose any efforts to construct a gambling facility at the Rockingham Mall; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City Clerk be directed to immediately transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to our federal and state delegation members, the Town of Salem, NH Manager, and the members of Salem’s Town Council, and Planning Board.

**CERTIFICATION AND ATTESTATION OF THE CITY CLERK**

**I hereby certify the RESOLUTION set forth above, pertaining to Lawrence City Council Document 539/24 entitled “Resolution Against the Proposed Rockingham Mall Casino” is a true and accurate copy of said Resolution adopted by a unanimous vote of the Lawrence City Councilor members present and voting at their regularly scheduled meeting occurring on Tuesday, November 19, 2024, and appearing in the files and records maintained by the Office of the City Clerk concerning the same.**

True Copy Attest:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jennifer Duran, Assistant City Clerk  
Lawrence, MA

Dated: November 21, 2024