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Contact: **Debra P. DiLorenzo**, Chairwoman
No North Jersey Casinos Coalition
(609) 870-2775 – Cell
ddilorenzo@chambersnj.com

Rebuttal to Jeff Gural's Op-ed published on September 12, 2016

As the Chairwoman of the No North Jersey Casinos Coalition, I take issue with many of the points in Jeff Gural's recent op-ed, "Revitalizing A.C. Requires Gaming Expansion" published in the Press of Atlantic City.

Atlantic City is the second largest gaming destination in the country next to Las Vegas. The city has seven generally thriving casinos that employ thousands of people. Revenues are on the rise. In fact, the Atlantic City casino industry boosted profits by more than 20 percent in the first half of 2016. Profits are up at six Atlantic City casinos – four of them by double digits.

Operators in Atlantic City have been rebuilding their businesses and diversifying their offerings. And they're continuing to reinvent themselves. They've grown their convention space and have put an increased focus on better dining options, outdoor entertainment venues, shopping and other luxury amenities. Investments beyond the casino floor are happening every day.

But that progress will be thwarted by expansion of casino gambling in North Jersey. The answer to Atlantic City's fiscal problems is not to cannibalize the existing casinos by oversaturating the market. But that's just what Mr. Gural is advocating.

He erroneously cites that this referendum would generate \$500 million a year in tax revenue and claims \$200 million of that would go toward revitalizing Atlantic City.

But where do those numbers come from? The State Legislature neglected to set the tax rate for the two new proposed casinos, so how can we estimate revenue when figures being floated in Trenton range anywhere from a 15 percent tax rate to a 60 percent rate? And how can we guarantee these funds would even be appropriated as promised? Mr. Gural's self-serving support of this so called panacea for Atlantic City is folly.

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Add one

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No North Jersey Casinos Coalition

The No North Jersey Casinos Coalition is working hard every day with our sister coalition Trenton's Bad Bet to oppose the public question seeking to expand gaming to North Jersey. We are doing so by educating the electorate on the quantified devastating economic impact this constitutional amendment could cause our State: gaming revenue declines of \$691 million to \$1.4 billion, three to five additional casinos closing, 23,000 to 30,000 jobs lost throughout the region, lost regional and state economic output of \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion and loss of \$100 million in spending on Atlantic City's Boardwalk. How does expanding gaming to North Jersey help our State with these results?

It doesn't! We urge New Jersey to vote no on Question One!

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The **No North Jersey Casinos (NNJC)** Coalition is an alliance of business leaders and organizations, organized labor, government officials, and members of the general public who are opposed to the expansion of gaming outside of Atlantic City. The Coalition is committed to defeating the ballot question which would allow for up to two casinos to be built in Northern New Jersey.

4015 Main Street, Voorhees, NJ 08043 • Phone: (856) 424-7776, extension 116 •

www.nonorthjerseycasinos.com