

Our cities and towns are in fiscal crisis. Our residents cannot bear the burden of increasing property taxes and declining local revenues any longer. As Mayor of Chicopee, I believe resort-style casinos will bring needed revenues and economic development to cities and towns throughout Massachusetts through new local aid.

Under the Governor's proposal, resort-style casinos will create \$500 million per year in new tax revenues. This does not even include the income-, sales- and property-tax revenues we'll get from more people being employed, and consequently being able to purchase homes and have greater spending power, in turn, creating even more jobs. This \$500 million in new annual public revenues will give the state a yearly economic boost unobtainable from any other source.

In addition to our state needing revenues, our cities and towns need help getting things done. Schools, police and fire departments, and roads and bridges all need a reliable and predictable source of local aid. Our roads and bridges are falling apart, with 12% of our state's bridges structurally deficient and many roads in dire need of improvement. Municipal needs for more police on the street, enhanced fire and emergency response

systems, and more school funding have never been greater, with a growing population and the raised stakes of homeland security. But with property taxes at crushing levels, ranking 6th highest per capita in the nation, and our state's lottery – one of our main sources of local aid – in a state of maturity with declining revenues, the only thing we can count on right now is diminished local aid.

It is no secret that Massachusetts, like many other states, is still recovering from the 2001 national recession. We can't keep paying for schools, public safety, and roads and bridges in Connecticut. We need more jobs, and we need more revenues. Resort-style casinos are not the whole solution, but without question they are part of it.

I am strongly in favor of licensing three resort-style casinos in Massachusetts: For our towns. For our cities. For a better Massachusetts. It's our time at the table.

Sincerely,  
Honorable Michael D. Bissonnette

*Mike Bissonnette*

Mayor  
City of Chicopee

