

# Gambling ban would reverse recession, new book says

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Legalized gambling is weighing down a global economy already mired in its deepest downturn since the Great Depression, according to a new collection of research that renews decades-old calls to outlaw betting.

The United States International [Gambling](#) Report series says casinos siphon money away from economies struggling to rebound, and saddle taxpayers with hefty, ongoing costs to battle crime and other social problems that gambling spawns.

Those economic arguments failed to halt two decades of gambling expansion, but could finally click as lawmakers try to reverse a lingering [global recession](#), said University of Illinois professor John W. Kindt, a national gambling critic and contributing author and editor of the nearly 3,000-page series.

"Because of the economy, people are starting to realize they need to get back to sound economic principles," he said. "If you want to get out of the recession, you have to go back to basics, and economists agree that you can't gamble your way to prosperity. In fact, it's just the opposite."

A sweeping ban would put money lost to gambling back into the traditional consumer economy, where an economic "multiplier effect" triples its impact by creating new jobs supplying goods and services, according to the latest volume in the series, "Gambling With Crime, Destabilized Economies and Financial Systems."

The three-volume series of academic and government reports recommends that the U.S. and other countries follow the lead of Russia, which has seen an economic boost since it virtually abolished legalized gambling in 2006-07.

"The longer we wait, the longer it will take to see the impact," said Kindt, a professor of business and public policy who has studied gambling for more than 20 years. "If people don't want to do that, fine. Enjoy your recession."

The just-released volume on gambling's links to crime and the economy caps the research series, published by William S. Hein & Co., of Buffalo, N.Y. Other books include a volume of executive summaries and recommendations, and a volume devoted to research showing that gambling harms national security and military readiness.

Compiled by the Research Editors Doctoral Directorate, a loosely knit group of doctoral researchers initially based on the Illinois campus, the series is the first academic collection examining gambling and its costs to society.

Other research findings included in the book conclude:

- Gambling fails valid cost-benefit analyses, similar to proposals that seek to legalize marijuana and addictive drugs.
- History shows government and gambling cannot coexist, and that gambling interests will ultimately corrupt government.
- Government-sponsored gambling is second only to Big Oil and oil dependence as the most threatening catalyst for worldwide economic and financial destabilization.

- Crime jumps 10 percent in areas with casinos, personal bankruptcies soar 18 to 42 percent and the number of new, addicted gamblers doubles.
- Legalized gambling creates and finances new organized crime in the U.S. and countries around the world.
- Australia has the world's highest concentrations of gambling, and the highest per-person social costs of any industrialized nation.
- Despite job-creation claims by the gambling industry, 90 percent of gambling revenue goes into slot machines, which create no new employment.

Kindt says the findings show that the U.S. and other countries should finally heed calls that have sounded for more than a decade to outlaw gambling, which would prime the global economic pump by diverting wasted spending.

"We never should have brought all of this gambling into the economy," he said. "During the [Great Depression](#), President Roosevelt got rid of the prohibition on alcohol, but he didn't put casinos on every corner, because you can't gamble your way to economic health."

Source: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign ([news](#) : [web](#))

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