



O'NEILL: B.C.'s gambling advertising goes too far

By [Terry O'Neill - The Tri-City News](#)

Published: **May 27, 2011 1:00 AM**

FACE TO FACE: Is gambling good for B.C. or bad for British Columbians?

Drive by Coquitlam's Boulevard Casino at any hour on any day of any week in any month of the year and you'll see a parking lot full of cars driven by folks who have gone inside to part with their money in amusing and diverting ways.

Losers always outnumber winners by a wide margin — that's the nature of the gambling beast. But since no one is forcing any of the players to try their hand at the slots or poker, I don't see much wrong with the way the casinos do business.

But I do have a larger concern.

My colleague and I are lifting the lid on casino gambling this week in the wake of Vancouver's recent rejection of a mega-casino attached to the re-roofed and re-imagined BC Place.

My left-wing pal and I aren't much bothered about the decision one way or the other but some bigger issues about gambling do get under our skin.

For me, it's the fact the province has come to position itself as gambling's biggest cheerleader. Oh, sure, the folks at the government's Lottery Corp. always warn us to "Know your limit, play within it." But the admonition is far outweighed by the corporation's distasteful and unbecoming promotion of everything from cheap scratch-and-win tickets to high-stakes "gaming" at casinos.

I have a suggestion: Let's severely limit all commercial promotion of lotteries and casinos,

and let the chips fall where they may (pun intended).

As for my colleague, his big beef is that state-sanctioned gambling is tantamount to “a tax on the poor.” It’s a common complaint and is based on the fact that many low-income people choose to play games of chance.

I’ve got two problems with this line of griping: First, it’s the blatant misuse of the word “tax.” As my colleague should know, a tax is actually a compulsory contribution to government. Clearly, however, gambling is an entirely voluntary activity. No one is forcing “the poor” to do anything.

My second concern with my colleague’s argument is that it suggests poor people aren’t actually capable of making up their minds for themselves and, therefore, need to be protected from making wrong or bad decisions. There’s a word to describe this sort of attitude: condescending.

```
a.adLink_a:hover {background-color: ; text-decoration: underline; } a.adTitle_a:hover
{background-color: ; text-decoration: underline; } a.adLink_a {text-decoration: none; color:
gray; } .single_center {text-align: center} a.adTitle_a {text-decoration: none } .adText {text-
decoration:none; font-family: Arial; font-size: 12px; font-weight: normal; font-style:
normal;} .adLink {overflow: hidden; color:gray;text-decoration:none; font-family: Arial;
font-size: 17px; font-weight: normal; font-style: normal;} .abg {color: gray;text-
decoration:none; font-family: Arial; font-size: 11px; font-weight: bold; font-style: normal;}
.adTitle {color:2e95d9;text-decoration:none; font-family: Arial; font-size:14px; font-weight:
normal; font-style: normal;} .ad_box1 {border-style:solid;border-width:1px; border-
color:#FFF; background-color: #ebf4fb;width:500px;margin-left:0px; opacity: 1;
background-image: url(); background: nottransparent; margin: 0 auto; clear: both; }
<
```

Find this article at:

http://www.bclocalnews.com/tri_city_maple_ridge/tricitynews/opinion/122619899.html

☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

© Copyright Black Press. All rights reserved.