

Dear: Candidate for the Office of President

I'm very proud to be the Mayor of Altoona, Iowa. Altoona is one of Iowa's fastest growing cities. It's just east of Des Moines on Interstate 80. As the home of a Face Book data center, we are on the cutting edge of science and technology. We also have earned a reputation as an entertainment center since Adventureland Theme Park, Bass Pro and Prairie Meadows race and casino, as well as numerous restaurants and hotels all are within our city limits.

No organization has contributed more to our community's growth and cultural development than Prairie Meadows Casino. As a non-profit organization, the race track and casino has contributed over a billion dollars in taxes, grants and charitable donations to the State of Iowa and our local community organizations.

But recent changes in federal gaming laws are making it more and more difficult for nonprofit casinos like Prairie Meadows to contribute to their communities. Nowhere is there more evident than the unrestricted growth of Indian Casinos. The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act has restricted these casinos to tribal lands and land held in trust for tribes by the federal government. But now, for some inexplicable reason, the Department of Interior has started authorizing the development of land purchased by tribes that is located significant distances from their tribal reservation holdings.

This has created an escalating situation where tribes seek to gain competitive advantages over each other and existing gaming establishments by locating on land situated closer to the population base that supports the existing casinos. Since tribes already have significant competitive advantages such as exemption from state and local taxation and regulatory controls, this creates a very unfair competitive advantage. Unrestricted and unregulated expansion of casino gambling is not good for Iowa and it's not good for America.

I'm writing to ask you for your commitment, should you be elected our next President of the United States, to restore common sense policies that would limit the unrestricted growth of tribal gaming to areas located on reservation land or land contiguous to the reservation land that has strong historical and cultural ties to the tribes. This policy that has been successfully supported by both Democratic and Republican administrations and which has provided the foundation for the development of a significant Indian gaming industry.

We need common sense guidance to regulate the expansion of Indian gaming activities. I hope that we can count on your leadership.



J.M. Skip Conkling
Mayor, Altoona, Iowa