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Gun Lake casino opponents use misleading claims

Michigan Gambling Opposition and 23 is Enough display hypocritical and disingenuous actions by boasting "statewide anti-gambling" credentials while opposing only the Gun Lake Tribe's governmental gaming proposal. The latest example occurred on Jan. 7, 2008, when the Muskegon City Commission considered casino plans presented by an Upper Peninsula tribe from 500 miles away.

The Muskegon proposal brought a tremendous amount of interest from west Michigan residents both for and against, but MichGO and 23 is Enough were noticeably absent.

According to countless public statements, these groups believe that Michigan has too many casinos, so they've vowed to stop any new ones from opening. MichGO's stated purpose is to "stop the expansion of casino gambling in Michigan," and its benefactor 23 is Enough's stated purpose is to "oppose the expansion of casinos in Michigan." Actions, however, speak louder than words.

Despite these hollow claims, neither group has acted against other west Michigan gaming expansions or proposals from the horse racing industry, Michigan Lottery, nor developers interested in building casinos, like Peter Secchia.

In addition to the Muskegon proposal, a number of other casino proposals are pending around the state. Both MichGO and 23 is Enough have had numerous opportunities to back up their rhetoric and weigh in against expanded gaming.

This hypocrisy is illuminated by the fact that a mountain of evidence links MichGO to operatives of the Blue Chip Casino, as reported by the Grand Rapids Press. Secretary-of-state lobbying records prove that Blue Chip also contracted MichGO's Grand Rapids law firm Warner, Norcross & Judd.

The self-proclaimed statewide gambling opponents ignore real gaming expansion already happening via the state lottery. Instead, they have spent millions of dollars to delay economic progress for area residents, small-business owners and tribal members.

Child poverty and unemployment in west Michigan have increased at an alarming rate over the last several years. The time has come for the members of 23 is Enough and MichGO to quit delaying the inevitable and allow west Michigan to pursue badly needed economic growth.

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