

New book series renews call for ban on gambling

4/2/2009 | Jan Dennis, Business & Law Editor | 217-333-0568; jdennis@illinois.edu

[[Email](#) | [Share](#)] CHAMPAIGN, Ill. – Banning gambling is among the best bets to reverse a deep recession that has crippled the global economy, according to a new collection of books that offer the most comprehensive analysis ever on the financial perils of wagering.



John W. Kindt, a nationally known gambling critic, is a contributing author and editor of the three-volume United States International Gambling Report Series, which calls for a ban on gambling. | Photo courtesy College of Business

The United States International Gambling Report Series recommends the United States and other countries follow Russia's lead, shuttering casinos that undermine economic growth and cost taxpayers at least \$3 for every \$1 in benefits as a result of increased bankruptcies, crime and gambling addictions.

"What do the Russians know that is still eluding U.S. government officials?" says University of Illinois professor John W. Kindt, a nationally known gambling critic and contributing author and editor of the three-volume series. "They know that you can't gamble yourself to prosperity. It actually makes everything worse."

Personal bankruptcies soar 18 to 42 percent in areas with casinos, crime jumps 10 percent and rates for new addicted gamblers double, according to the nearly 3,000-page series, which compiles decades of academic and government research on gambling and its costs to society.

While adding costs for government programs, gambling also siphons money away from the traditional consumer economy, where an economic "multiplier effect" triples the value of every dollar spent by creating jobs that supply goods and services, research shows.

"Money spent on gambling is not spent on cars, refrigerators, computers and other consumer products," Kindt said. "Money that goes into gambling is primarily used to build more casinos, which just compounds the negative economic impact."

The series predicts economic growth will soon rebound in Russia, which virtually abolished legal gambling by shutting down 2,230 casinos in 2006-07 after two decades of expansion that mirrored the rise of gambling in the U.S.

Kindt, a professor of business and legal policy, hopes the U.S. will consider following suit as it seeks to halt the nation's deepest economic downturn since the Great Depression.

"They're looking for solutions, and this is an obvious solution," he said. "It's in every economic textbook. You can't gamble your way to prosperity. It creates no products or new jobs, so we need to get rid of gambling to pump-prime the economy."

The U.S. International Gambling Report Series is the first academic collection to take a comprehensive look at gambling, according to publisher William S. Hein & Co., based in Buffalo, N.Y.

Five years in the making, the vast collection of academic and government reports was compiled by the Research Editors Doctoral Directorate on Gambling, a loosely knit group of doctoral researchers initially based at the U. of I.

"Gambling: Executive Summaries and Recommendations" kicks off the three-volume series, renewing calls to

outlaw gambling that have mounted since the 1999 U.S. National Gambling Impact Study Commission sought a moratorium on gambling expansion.

The remaining volumes reprint hundreds of reports that explore specific consequences of gaming – “Gambling With National Security, Terrorism and Military Readiness” and “Gambling With Crime, Destabilized Economies and Financial Systems.”

Kindt says the exhaustive collection of research will aid the public and policy makers when calls to curtail gambling spark renewed debate with the gambling industry and its powerful lobby.

“It’s simply a question of whether the American public is going to listen to special interest groups or if they’re going to demand that their government focus on public health, safety and welfare,” Kindt said. “That’s between the public and their elected officials. All we can do is present the research.”

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