



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

John Loudon
7th Senate District

CAPITOL BUILDING, ROOM 422
JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65101

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Contact: Nick Bengston
(573) 751-9763

Sen. Loudon Chairs Gambling Committee Meeting

JEFFERSON CITY—State Sen. John Loudon, R-Chesterfield, today took part in a public meeting of the Joint Committee on Gaming and Wagering. Loudon chairs the committee, which reviews gaming and wagering activities in Missouri. Committee members today discussed illegal gambling in restaurants and bars and who has jurisdiction over illegal gaming devices.

“Having an illegal gambling device in a bar is akin to an athlete on steroids,” Loudon said. “In both instances, perpetrators are engaging in an illegal, unhealthy, black-market activity and gaining an advantage over the competition.”

At the public hearing, national gambling expert Professor John Warren Kindt of the University of Illinois testified on the effects of gaming in his state. Each slot machine in Illinois, approximately 9,000 devices, costs the state one job, Kindt said. Missouri has approximately 18,000 with 5,000 on the way.

Members engaged in heavy debate over illegal gambling devices in bars and restaurants. The discussion revolved around the fact that no state agency has jurisdiction over illegal gaming devices, including the Missouri Gaming Commission and the Missouri Division of Alcohol and Tobacco Control.

Department of Public Safety Director Mark James told committee members that his agency is seeking an opinion from the Missouri Attorney General involving this question.

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The Joint Committee on Gaming and Wagering reviews all state-authorized gaming and wagering activities, including proposed constitutional and statutory changes that may affect the integrity of these activities. The committee is authorized to meet and act year round, employ the necessary personnel within the limits of appropriations and to report its findings annually to the Missouri General Assembly.

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