



# The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe Of Michigan

## PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

7070 EAST BROADWAY

MT. PLEASANT, MICHIGAN 48858

(989) 775-4059

(989) 775-4074

FAX (989) 775-4052

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contact:** Frank Cloutier Director of Public Relations

## **Statewide Campaign to Protect Vote on Gaming Announced April 20, 2010 in Lansing**

April 20, 2010 the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe announced in conjunction with a statewide coalition "Protect MI Vote" (PMV) campaign to preserve the right to vote on gaming expansion. Elected officials and representatives of law enforcement, public education and business groups encourage voters not to sign casino expansion petitions that go against the Michigan Constitution and contain flawed provisions.

"Michigan Voters should decline to sign these flawed casino petitions. They would result in a loss of our constitutional right for each community to have a voice on gaming expansion," said Senator Alan Cropsy.

The PMV campaign comes in response to casino petitions recently approved by the Michigan election board to circulate for signatures. The petitions are being promoted by the horse racing industry and a former NFL running back. The petitions would create 15 new casinos without approval of the communities where each casino is proposed. The casinos promise a tax rate to be determined, money for education and special programs like horse racing after the details get sorted out in the political process in Lansing.

"The fine print in these proposals invites state general fund contributions to be diverted away from education and other important programs. It's the lottery shell game all over again," said Mark Westerberg, Superintendent of New Buffalo Area Schools.

Proposal 1-2004 amended the Michigan Constitution to require local voter approval of all future gaming expansions. The measure passed by an overwhelming margin of 58 percent.

"The voters spoke very clearly in 2004 when they decided to have a local and statewide vote on gaming expansion. I am compelled to protect the people's right to vote and therefore will continue to speak out against these petitions," said Representative Bert Johnson.

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The proposal from the former football player would give 7 new casino licenses to one unknown company, written into the Michigan Constitution. This proposal attempted to legalize sports betting in Michigan under its original petition to the election board. After this group was informed that sports betting is illegal under federal law it had to ask the board to remove it from the petition. That occurred on Friday April 16, 2010.

The horse racing proposal, also to be written into the Constitution, allows for 5 racetrack casinos and 3 additional casinos to be owned by someone else, but no one knows who. No one knows where either.

“In addition to creating an unfounded and unwarranted expansion of casino gambling in Michigan, the ballot proposal could lead to unintended consequences that seriously damage family values. Our Michigan Constitution is not the place for such profoundly flawed ideas, said Senator Jason Allen.

The same problems presented at the state level would also play out on a local level where each casino is proposed. The petition language promises money to local municipalities, but with out and funding priorities.

“Our organization is opposed because vital local services like public safety and infrastructure are not guaranteed to receive any funding, in fact they are ignored. If fifteen new casinos open it would put a huge responsibility on law enforcement but without the resources necessary to meet those obligations,” said Larry Orłowski, Executive Director of the Deputy Sheriff’s Association of Michigan.

Other coalition members that spoke at the PMV press conference on April 20, 2010 included Senator Buzz Thomas and Representative Bob Genetski; Marty Dodge, Vice President of the Kalamazoo Regional Chamber of Commerce; and James Muffett, President of Citizens for Traditional Values.

The group behind the effort to create **15** new casinos have until July 5 to collect over 380,000 valid signatures for each proposal. The PMV effort will continue through the deadline to submit signatures.

Electronic Versions of this press release and other information is available at [www.sagchip.org](http://www.sagchip.org). Press Release and Handouts provided by Protect MI Vote.