MASSACHUSETTS CATHOLIC CONFERENCE
WEST END PLACE

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

March 31, 2003

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 Administrator of Fall River

To: Joint Legislative Committee on
Government Regulations

I would like to place the Massachusetts Catholic Conference, representing the four Roman Catholic Dioceses of Massachusetts, on record before this Committee in opposition to the series of bills before you which will expand gambling here in the Commonwealth: H5452, H2796, H2958, H2792, H3153 and H3512.

The Catholic Bishops of Massachusetts have long opposed casino gambling. The Bishops stated, in 1994, that casino gambling will raise gambling to a new level in our Commonwealth and will encourage addictive gambling. The social impact on the more vulnerable of the Commonwealth's citizens is also a great concern. Bishop Sean O'Malley pointed out just last year when speaking on behalf of the Fall River Diocese that gambling victimizes the poor and the poor elderly, many of whom spend a large percentage of their limited income on gambling.

It is unfortunate that a number of Catholic educational and charitable programs have become dependent upon bingo and other games of chance. However, the Bishops have stated in the past that better stewardship will minimize dependency on these sources of revenue.

Granted the state is in a precarious financial position in trying to meet its obligations in providing services to those who need them, during this fiscal crisis. However, to resort to expanded gambling, with all of its negative social repercussions, is not a wise and prudent course.

For the above stated reasons, I respectfully ask this Committee to vote against expansion of gambling including casino gambling in the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

Gerry D'Avolio, Esq.
Executive Director

Archdiocese of Boston—Dioceses of Fall River, Springfield, Worcester