

# GAMING LEGAL NEWS



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## BREAKING NEWS

### UNNAMED DEVELOPERS SEEK CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT FOR EIGHT NEW CASINOS IN MICHIGAN

by Robert W. Stocker II

A group of unnamed developers operating under the title “Citizens for More Michigan Jobs” obtained approval from the Michigan Board of State Canvassers on April 3, 2012, as to the form of a petition to amend Michigan’s constitution to permit the establishment of eight new land-based commercial casinos. The proposal would authorize the eight new casinos on specifically described real estate in communities across Michigan’s Lower Peninsula. Citizens for More Michigan Jobs has not disclosed all the owners of the real estate parcels described in the proposed constitutional amendment. The proponents must obtain at least 322,609 valid signatures by July 9 in order to have the constitutional amendment proposal placed on the November general election ballot. The proposed constitutional amendment also lifts restrictions currently placed on the state’s lottery operations.

Michigan currently has 22 Native American casinos located throughout the state as well as three commercial casinos in the city of Detroit. The petition proposal would place casinos on specifically described real estate in and around Detroit, Pontiac, and Flint in Southeast Michigan as well as in the Lansing and Grand Rapids metropolitan areas in central and western lower Michigan, providing direct competition to the three Detroit commercial casinos and several Native American casinos in central and western lower Michigan.

The Citizens for More Michigan Jobs constitutional amendment proposal comes on the heels of the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians’ controversial efforts to establish an off-reservation tribal casino in downtown Lansing.

If all of these efforts to expand gaming in Michigan succeed, Michigan’s casinos would expand by almost fifty percent from the 25 currently existing casinos to 34 casinos.

If the effort to place the constitutional amendment proposal on November’s ballot is successful, there will likely be a major battle

between the undisclosed developers and Michigan's currently existing gaming industry that will involve expenditures in the tens of millions of dollars on both sides. Other recent efforts to expand gaming in Michigan have been unsuccessful. In fact, the only successful ballot proposal that received the support of Michigan voters since the public referendum approval of the three Detroit commercial casinos is a 2004 constitutional amendment that restricts the expansion of commercial casinos in Michigan. The 2004 initiative passed by a significant margin. Polls taken in recent years have suggested that Michigan's voters believe that Michigan already has a sufficient number of casinos. Absent a significant change in public opinion, the developers behind the current constitutional amendment proposal face a significant uphill, as well as very expensive, battle for public support to dramatically increase commercial casino gaming in Michigan.