

## Community Voices Shut Out

Contributed by William Epstein, Multi-Community Alliance  
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This week's hearings by the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board "are taking place with no true community input and will allow the slots applicants to make any unsubstantiated statements they want, without examination or comment by the people and communities who will be most directly impacted by casinos," the representatives of six neighborhoods that would be adversely affected by one applicant's proposal said today.

Ralph Wynder and Irv Ackelsberg, representing the Multi-Community Alliance (MCA), a coalition of 27 neighborhood organizations surrounding the proposed casino site in the Nicetown/East Falls area on Roberts Ave. near Henry Ave., said the Gaming Board should have allowed community leaders to participate in this week's hearings.

"Instead, the applicant in our case, Trump Entertainment, has hand-picked two representatives from organizations that have negotiated a financial arrangement with the company. These individuals have been listed in Trump's filing for the hearings and will be put forth by the Trump organization as allegedly representing a series of residential communities that in reality have been left out of the proceedings this week," Wynder and Ackelsberg said in their statement.

The two urged the Gaming Control Board to weigh the consistently strong opposition to the proposed casino that has been voiced by residents of Nicetown, Abbottsford, Tioga, East Falls, Southwest Germantown, and Ridge/Allegheny West/Hunting Park- all of which are within walking distance of the proposed site.

They said the opposition is based on the estimated 16 million vehicles a year that would overburden already jammed streets in the neighborhoods; the Trump organization's misrepresentation of the impacted communities, and the unreliability of the Trump organization. They stated:

"The Trump application has failed to respond in a meaningful way to the onslaught of traffic that a slots parlor would bring to our residential neighborhoods. The company has failed to make its plans available to the community; it has the weakest job creation proposal of any of the five applicants; and it has a checkered and unreliable financial record, having declared bankruptcy twice and abandoned one city, French Lick, Indiana, after being awarded a license.

"The residents of our six neighborhoods remain firmly united in their drive to convince members of the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board that the site of the former Budd Co. and current Tasty Baking Co. is the wrong location for a casino. The leaders of the two largest institutions in the community oppose the proposal. The site adjoins one high school and is one block from another school. Trump has misled the Gaming Control Board and the news media by portraying the site and our neighborhoods as dilapidated and wasting away. That portrayal is false. The former Budd Co. property is attracting major investments, and we don't need a casino to save our neighborhoods. A casino will only destroy our community. We will continue to use every means at our disposal to fight this proposal."