

**House Executive Committee**  
**Monday, May 11, 2015 10:00 a.m.**

**Subject Matter Hearing:** Gaming and its Ancillary Industries- Tourism, Hotels, and Restaurants

**Testimony:** Kimbal T. Goluska, President, The Chicago Consultants Studio, Inc. & Board Member, the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce

**Testimony**

Mr. Chairman, and members of the Committee- my name is Kim Goluska and I am a planning and urban development professional based here in Chicago. Since 1991 when the concept of a land-based, downtown Chicago casino was first raised and I found myself in the Mayor's office with four international gaming companies offering at that time to invest \$2B of private money in downtown Chicago, I have consistently advocated for the casino as a significant competitive economic development tool for the city, the county and the state.

Working with the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce and its collation of civic, business, labor and industry leaders, I am here once again today to reiterate the potential opportunity this presents to the economic vitality of the region.

While the gaming tax revenues will be substantial at either end of the estimated range, the real value of, and the **primary** reason to pursue this endeavor is for its larger economic development and city-building potential. That is why we have come before the various legislative committees multiple times to voice our counsel that it is essential that a downtown Chicago be done right – and the focus of today's hearing (Tourism, Hotels and Restaurants) is an important part of that larger economic development formula's success.

Doing the Chicago Casino "right" means:

- Being located in the heart of the downtown where it can leverage and increase tourism, convention/meeting business, theater and entertainment offerings, retail and dining anchors, cultural attractions and attract both out of town tourists and create amenities for local residents
- It means that the broader economic benefits which Michael referenced should far exceed the direct tax revenues – if not, then we are not doing it right
- It means setting the metrics high and setting the framework properly to attract the gaming industry companies who will be *the best business partners for Chicago*
- And, it means focusing on attracting gaming operators who can fill McCormick Place with conventions and meetings, bring year round, world-class theater product to Randolph Street, bring new retail anchors to the city ---- a permanent Cirque du Soleil in the Chicago Theater or new conventions/meetings in McCormick Place or a Harrods

department store anchor on State Street have all long been aspirations we desire and would be worth billions to the region if we strategically leverage a casino to realize them

The recent Chicago Sun-Times editorial was spot on when it highlighted that several hundred million dollars annually of new gaming tax revenue to the City, the County and the State would certainly be nice to see but would not solve the huge fiscal issues in front of us. If the Chicago casino is not done in a manner which creates the billions in spin off economic impacts we believe it can – then it is not being done right. The Chicagoland Chamber and its coalition partners stand ready, as we have since 1991, to help lead the way to structure, conceive and implement a downtown Chicago casino that will be a source of civic pride for the city and the region – and an economic development engine far greater than we can imagine.

The first Chairman of the Chamber, Marshall Field, in 1911 noted that “*Chicago’s commerce must always be the first consideration of this association*” highlighting that without “*commercial supremacy*” all the critical and essential aspects of community building (schools, hospitals, cultural assets) were not possible. We must do this right so that it produces the lasting and powerful “commerce” that Marshall Field spoke of 100 years ago.

Thank you.