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State's gambling push outrageous

By Beth Paschall, Palos Heights

Illinois is close to falling into the abyss of having three times the amount of gambling than we now have.

The Senate in the final hours of the session passed HB 2651 which would create three new casinos, put slot machines at race tracks, allow betting on horse races on the Internet, etc.

Gov. Blagojevich threatens to call legislators back to Springfield in an attempt to get the House to pass this massive expansion of gambling.

Where is the outrage?

There is almost no mention in the press of this 800-pound-gorilla-gambling bill. Legislators are staying very quiet on the subject.

Is that because an ally of the governor is touring the state, no doubt offering bridges or roads in districts of legislators who will support expansion of gambling?

An attempt is being made to make the case that gambling expansion is the only way to fund a capital construction program for the state.

A report in the *Chicago Tribune* of a study done by the Rockefeller Institute of Government says "states should not rely on gambling as a growth stream."

Relying on gambling revenues is "not going to be a real winner of a solution in the long term."

The harm that increases gambling inflicts on families, on existing businesses, on street safety, on our work ethic should make us pause to think deeply.