

The California Disability Gaming Initiative A Path to Dignity and Self Reliance

By Richard Roehm

Millions of Californians with deafness and disabilities still live in poverty. The California Disability Gaming Initiative is a good bet to provide hope and opportunities for all people with disabilities.

The California Disability Gaming Initiative is to help the California deaf and disability organizations establish gaming revenues by owning and operating casinos in the rural areas of California. The gaming revenues will then translate into improved service offerings by participating deaf and disability organizations and brighten the outlook on the future of the deaf and disability communities.

We've already had our 15 year gamble with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) not to mention the payout for ADA litigation has been less than 5% which is far less than the payout of most slot machines at casinos. Barriers still remain in our ways to full participation in societal offerings. Barriers compounded by federal policy changes do very little to help our quest or journey toward independence. This includes cutting funding for domestic programs. Even now Vocational Rehabilitation is set to have it's budget slashed. Furthermore, due to lack of funding, the Ticket to Work Initiative has been declared a joke by many disability organizations throughout the United States. The result we have seen so far has been nothing more than a continuous cycle of dependency on the taxpayer supported welfare systems.

How do we break the cycle of dependency? One proven solution is the California Disability Gaming Initiative. We need to explore the California Disability Gaming Initiative which is a good path toward establishing our dignity and self reliance.

This type of initiative has been proven to work very well with the Native American tribes, it will work with the disability communities once we make the effort to make it happen. This type of initiative is a 'best practices' type of solution we need to seriously explore.

Basically the California Disability Gaming Initiative will enable participating deaf and disability organizations establish gaming revenues as a means to stabilize and enhance the funding of their diverse program offerings. The future of public funding for disability services have become the biggest question faced by the deaf and disability programs that depend on it. Through the California Disability Gaming Initiative they will own and operate casinos in the sparsely populated regions of California and become free from unstable funding sources.

Once fully implemented, the California Disability Gaming Initiative would utilize the resources of participating deaf and disability organizations to;

--Improve residential and health care opportunities for people with disabilities. We will have the means to establish our own residential health care systems that doesn't sound like a Laguna Honda nightmare.

--Offer new accessible housing to replace the aging, insensitive, and sub-standard housing already available to the deaf and disability communities.

--Create jobs and job training to break the cycle of welfare in the deaf and disability communities.

--Work toward reducing and eliminating SSI, SSDI, and other welfare payments to the thousands of people with disabilities through the jobs created by casinos.

--Offer pre-school and after-school daycare for children of working adults with disabilities.

--Award scholarships to people with disabilities going to college.

--Establish new mental health and counseling facilities to provide specialized alcohol and drug addiction services to the deaf and disability communities.

--Enable economic diversification through investments in non-gaming businesses like hotels, office buildings, banking, social services, store and restaurant franchising, and others among many opportunities already available to the non-disabled communities. This will result in additional jobs for the deaf and disabled.

The impact of California Disability Gaming Initiative would be thunderous. We would be able to become self reliant and help break the cycle of welfare. We would get hundreds of thousands of deaf and people with disabilities off welfare payments especially SSI and SSDI and that itself would result in taxpayer savings by the billions of dollars annually. And this initiative is easily replicable in other states.

And the California Disability Gaming Initiative would also enable Californians with disabilities access barrier free gaming establishments. Most California gaming establishments remain inaccessible to people with disabilities. Some gaming establishments are on mountainous areas making it unsafe for wheelchair users, many California casinos permit smoking inside, many have employees that are very insensitive to people with disabilities.

We've gambled 15 years of our lives with the ADA and over the years it has been watered down to an ineffective tool to help the deaf and disability communities become fully integrated into our society. It's my belief that the California Disability Gaming Initiative would change everything in the deaf and disability communities for the better and is worth a good look.

Please ask your state assemblyperson and state senator to support the California Disability Gaming Initiative as this is a proven way to get the millions of deaf and disabled people out of the cycle of dependency and into a brighter future.

More information on the California Disability Gaming Initiative will be available at <http://www.deafadvocacy.org> in the near future.

YOUR ORGANIZATION IS INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN

The California Disability Gaming Initiative Coalition (CDGIC)

By being a member to this coalition, your organization will create a positive impact on safeguarding the deaf and disability organization’s abilities to provide needed services to the deaf and disabled consumers that need assistance. You and your organization will be kept up to date on our progress and be guaranteed an opportunity to participate in gaming operations once we are allowed to operate casinos.

Richard Roehm
Chairperson, CDGIC

Yes, I would like to enlist our organization in the California Disability Gaming Initiative Coalition.

Name _____ Rank _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Please mail or fax this page to the contact information below

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