

Welcome, Democratic Candidates

To the candidates and their campaigns, let me be the first to welcome you to the gaming industry's hometown and introduce you to an industry that's more than bright neon lights. The upcoming Democratic primary debate presents an opportunity for you to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for the casino gaming industry, an economic juggernaut in Nevada and increasingly across the country.

Today's gaming industry is not only a great source of entertainment, but also an economic driver, community partner, and major taxpayer in 43 states. We are a \$261 billion industry that is so much more than the casino floor.

As president of the trade group representing the U.S. casino industry, I have seen first-hand the deep engagement and impact we have in communities across America. There's the fire chief in western Pennsylvania who used proceeds from gaming taxes to purchase new fire trucks and replace outdated life-saving equipment. There are the casino employees who helped get the Gulf Coast back on its feet after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, even though their properties were severely affected by the storms, too. In southern Nevada, the industry is at the forefront of sustainable business practices and has adopted water conservation programs at nearly twice the rate of other private sector businesses.

Gaming generates \$40.79 billion in taxes to local, state, and federal governments for infrastructure, education, and other needed investments. We are also the rare exception in an era of bidding wars with expensive incentives and tax breaks to attract businesses. When gaming enters a new market, whether with a new property or a new offering like legalized sports betting, the industry does so without subsidies and pays significant taxes for the privilege. We're adding to, not subtracting from, the bottom line.

When gaming arrives, people immediately notice the stereotypes they've heard don't match reality. We support 1.8 million American jobs, offering an opportunity for a rewarding career and upward mobility. Our diverse work force (4-in-10 gaming employees are people of color) is also growing.

Through careers in gaming, our employees raise families, pay tuitions and mortgages, and contribute their time and money to make the communities they call home better places to live and work. I constantly hear of employees who started as dishwashers, housekeepers, or dealers and worked their way up to executive chefs, management, or corporate offices.

We strengthen small businesses. In fact, casinos purchase more than \$3 billion in goods and services from small businesses annually and by extension, support 350,000 small business jobs. I've had the opportunity to meet some of our small business partners: a florist whose company is thriving because 70% of her business now comes from the casino; the owner of a produce company on the brink of closing that became a \$40 million company after gaming came to town; or the cleaner who expanded her company from four to 32 employees as the result of her work with the gaming industry.

The more business owners, local leaders, and community members know of the gaming industry, the deeper and broader our support becomes. Nearly half of American adults expect to visit a casino in the next year and attitudes towards gaming among the American public have never been more positive. Close to 90 percent of Americans see gaming as a mainstream entertainment option.

Part of that is driven by the industry's clear commitment to responsibility. From ensuring all patrons have the tools they need to engage in our offerings in a responsible manner to the innovative approaches our properties bring to sustainability efforts, responsibility is integrated into all that we do.

The gaming industry is a sophisticated industry hidden in plain sight. As candidates make their case to Nevadans and the country, I hope they will also use their visit to the Silver State to learn more about the gaming industry and the significant contributions to our nation's economy, the quality jobs it sustains, and the exciting entertainment experience we provide to millions of Americans.

Bill Miller

Bill Miller is president and CEO of the American Gaming Association (AGA), the premier national trade group representing the U.S. casino industry. AGA members include commercial and tribal casino operators, suppliers, and other key stakeholders in the gaming industry.



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