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## **KHAZEI OPPOSES PREDATORY GAMBLING BILLS UNDER CONSIDERATION IN THE STATE LEGISLATURE**

*Calls For Citizens to Join the "United to Stop Slots in Massachusetts" Campaign*

BOSTON – Candidate for US Senate and Co-Founder of City Year Alan Khazei submitted written testimony to the Joint Committee on Economic Development & Emerging Technologies in opposition to bills that would bring casinos into the Commonwealth. Khazei strongly opposes casino gambling in Massachusetts - the birthplace of American democracy - because it will fundamentally change the fabric and culture of our great state. Once we make this decision, we won't be able to turn it back. Khazei calls on citizens to join to find alternative ways to bring jobs to Massachusetts residents.

"I will be a jobs Senator because I know that people are hurting," Khazei said. "They've lost their jobs, their homes, their retirement savings, and their children's dreams of a college education. What some see in casinos is a quick fix, but they're not. They pay low wages. We need a sense of urgency for good jobs and we need a second stimulus package that focuses on job creation."

Khazei has a plan to create good, high-paying jobs in clean technology and energy, to support small businesses by providing tax breaks and incentives to grow, and to focus attention on health care, bio-tech, and education where Massachusetts has good opportunities and is positioned to do especially well.

"Gambling in general - slot machines in particular - prey on those who are struggling the most in this economy," Khazei added. "The computerized slot machines draw players in for extended periods of time, mesmerizing them the way video games mesmerize young people. So, while we try to raise revenue for the state by bringing casinos to Massachusetts, we will also bring loss and hardship to the citizens we are sworn to protect. If we make this decision, there will be no turning back and the storied history of Massachusetts will be forever changed for the worse. There is a better way. I urge all citizens in our state who share my grave concerns to get behind a growing citizens movement -- the United to Stop Slots in Massachusetts campaign -- led by an extraordinary citizen hero, Kathleen Norbut ( <http://uss-mass.org/myths.html>). "

Casinos prey on the most vulnerable in our society, including seniors and those with limited incomes. In fact, gambling costs taxpayers at least \$3 for every \$1 in benefits as a result of extra costs to address the social problems it causes. In areas with casinos, crime increases 8-10% and personal bankruptcies jump 18-42%. This is not the way to help the people of Massachusetts.

Khazei urges that the Joint Committee on Economic Development & Emerging Technologies initiate an unbiased cost-benefit analysis of expanded gambling in Massachusetts before proceeding any further with legislation to bring casinos to Massachusetts. That cost benefit analysis should look at not just the economic costs, but also the social costs of casino gambling and the impact on our children and seniors. In addition, Khazei proposes the creation of a National Gambling Regulatory Commission to protect citizens from practices that threaten public health and safety.

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*Alan Khazei, co-founder of City Year and founder of Be The Change, Inc. which inspired the creation of President Clinton's national and community service program AmeriCorps, is a community service pioneer and lifelong public servant. In 2006, US News and World Report named Alan one of America's 25 Best Leaders, and the Boston Globe Magazine identified him as one of 11 Bostonians Changing the World.*