

DAN CONLEY



MAYOR

May 14, 2013

The Honorable Stephen J. Murphy
President, Boston City Council
Boston City Hall, Suite 550
Boston, MA 02201

Dear President Murphy:

I am writing to respectfully request that you or any member of the Boston City Council draft an order for a series of hearings to be conducted in neighborhoods throughout the city on the matter of whether the referendum on a casino in East Boston should be limited to that one neighborhood or occur citywide. I believe the casino referendum should be citywide so that the voices of all the people of Boston can be heard. I also believe that, regardless of whether people support or oppose a casino, people want and need to be heard on this important issue.

I have significant concerns that a referendum limited to East Boston is potentially unconstitutional and could prove divisive. While East Boston will undoubtedly feel the greatest impact of a casino, its impact will not be limited to that one neighborhood. For this reason, I have proposed that the referendum itself should be read to reflect the support of the city only if it wins a majority of the vote citywide and in the host neighborhood. In so doing, the referendum gives the people of East Boston a position of primacy, an important protection against others potentially imposing a casino on a neighborhood that may or may not embrace one. Conversely, this two-part threshold prevents a single neighborhood from setting a course for the entire city that is so potentially momentous.

This two-tiered model is not without precedent. It is used in Rhode Island where any expansion of gaming is required to win the approval of voters throughout the state and in the host municipality. Last year, Rhode Island voters approved expanded gaming, as did the residents of Lincoln, Rhode Island. In Newport, however, residents rejected the expansion. As a result, gaming was expanded at the casino in Lincoln but not in Newport. Again, this prevents people who live outside a host community from imposing a casino on unwilling residents, and likewise prevents a single community from setting highly consequential policy for everyone else.

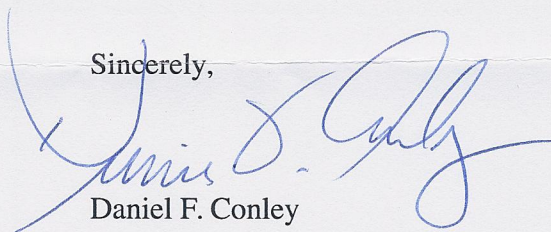
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These hearings can also be used as a forum to discuss another idea I proposed to ensure that the referendum itself is conducted with the utmost transparency and on a level playing field. Casino interests are clearly in a position to spend millions to affect the outcome of the referendum. A campaign spending cap would be ideal. Short of this however, any contributions and expenditures made in the referendum campaign should be completely transparent and fully and publicly disclosed.

While many members of the body have expressed their position on the referendum it should not preclude the idea of neighborhood hearings on the matter. We are one city, with one shared future. If this statement is to be a matter of fact, and not merely a slogan, then the process by which we decide on a casino is itself enormously consequential. I believe the referendum itself must be transparent and citywide and its results read to reflect our shared stake in it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Daniel F. Conley", is written over the typed name.

Daniel F. Conley

Cc: The Honorable Felix G. Arroyo
The Honorable John R. Connolly
The Honorable Ayanna Pressley
The Honorable Salvatore LaMattina
The Honorable Bill Linehan
The Honorable Frank Baker
The Honorable Charles C. Yancey
The Honorable Robert Consalvo
The Honorable Matt O'Malley
The Honorable Tito Jackson
The Honorable Michael P. Ross
The Honorable Mark Ciommo