

(The following is a five-minute address given on local TV in commercial time purchased by the coalition and run several times on the weekend before the general election. Ed Howell)

I'm Bucky Rizzo, the chairman of the Walker County Political Accountability Coalition. Over the past few months, you have probably read or heard about our organization. We have formed to try to restore accountability and trust in our local Walker County governments. We want to tackle many of the great issues that are facing this county, such as drugs, teen pregnancies, jobs, as well as make our government officials accountable and to try to restore the values that made this nation and this country great.

However, at the moment, all our plans and hopes for the future are being blocked by the greatest threat this county has seen in years. We don't have the money that electronic bingo has thrown at you, in the form of full-page advertisements, new cars and free food. We know that the charities in this county need revenue, especially as the economy has begun to enter a recession. We don't even dispute that, as bingo forces say, 80 percent of the people playing bingo are coming from outside. Probably 80 percent coming to gamble in Las Vegas, Tunica and Atlantic City come from the outside.

However, that doesn't mean you want your town to become like Las Vegas, Tunica and Atlantic City. Lane County, Oregon, has a government Web site with a page devoted to problems in gambling. It had statistics that showed that the average gambling-related debt in 2007 among problem gamblers in treatment was over \$26,100. It showed other statistics such as the following:

- According to a National Opinion Research Center study in 1999, case studies of 10 casino communities revealed that the majority of those communities witnessed increases in domestic violence related to the opening of casinos. The study said children of compulsive gamblers are often prone to suffer abuse, as well as neglect, as a result of parental problem or pathological gambling.
- A 1997 study revealed children of problem gamblers show more tendencies to use alcohol, drugs, tobacco, as well as overeat more often.

- A study in 1996 showed Gamblers Anonymous members report that approximately half of the participants had stolen to gamble and over one-third had been arrested.

There are many more of these types of facts that the gambling bosses won't tell you about. They won't tell you about Cindy Hayes on Filter Plant Road, whose family can't sleep at night because a bingo hall could move across the road from her residential neighborhood, with lights and noise going on throughout the night. That could be your neighborhood, because there are no restrictions. As long as these bingo halls can move in unchecked, it threatens our economic recruiting, challenges our social workers and law enforcement, and allows our county to become another Phenix City.

We don't have the money the gambling bosses do. But we have votes. Your vote. Your vote can elect a slate of county officials who will work to stop electronic bingo, and it can be done in the county just like it was done in Jasper, despite the excuses you are being told. It's right there in the amendments. Even if all else fails and it is allowed to continue, we need responsible leaders who will put in tough independent rules that can be enforced, not rules written by the gambling bosses in their favor.

This is one of the most important elections we've ever faced, not just because of the presidential race, but because of the future of Walker County. We are urging you to go to the polls on Tuesday, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and to vote for our slate of candidates: Jerry Bishop as chairman, Larry Cain as District 1 commissioner, Sheila Rice for treasurer, Jerry Guthrie as revenue commissioner, and Brad Ingle for board of education chairman.

Together, we can turn this county around and we don't need a dime to do it. We just need you to vote on Tuesday for responsible leaders who care about our children's future. Thank you.