



**TESTIMONY PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY HONORABLE MARIO J. CIVERA, JR.
CHAIRMAN, DELAWARE COUNTY COUNCIL**



**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GAMING OVERSIGHT
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HEARING ON SUPREME COURT LOCAL SHARE COURT DECISION**



OCTOBER 18, 2016

Good morning Chairman Payne, Chairman Kotik, and members of the Committee.

I am Mario Civera, Chairman of the Delaware County Council. I am joined today by my colleague Councilman John McBlain. I also had the privilege and honor of representing Delaware County in the House of Representatives for over 30 years before assuming my current role.

First of all, please accept our thanks for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am always happy to come back to the Capitol, but we are here to talk with you about an issue of great importance to Delaware County, the City of Chester and many other communities across the Commonwealth.

When my colleagues (including some of you) and I in the General Assembly voted to pass gaming legislation, both initially and the with respect to later amendments, we recognized the significance of the decisions we were making. We were approving something that had the potential to transform Pennsylvania, and we recognized both the opportunities and the risks.

After long debate, we decided to create a regulatory and revenue structure that recognized that gaming could help to support long-term local development and prosperity while offsetting other impacts. We learned from Atlantic City's experience, and sought to channel a portion of the revenue raised from gaming directly through local governments to where it could do the most good.

We believed that communities could use the presence of gaming to stimulate other growth and employment, to ensure that the casino would not just stand alone but would become one element in a larger effort. That didn't mean that we expected that something new would have to be built next door to the casino. We hoped that the money would be used to help the casino's neighborhood, its municipality and the entire area.

I believe we struck the right balance, a balance that the recent Supreme Court decision has upset, and that your response to that decision should be developed with those same goals in mind.

Our story, I am sure, is similar to those you will hear from other counties and municipalities. While many of us are similar, we all are different. Delaware County – the Commonwealth's fifth largest county - is a complex mix of densely-populated urban areas, rapidly growing townships, mature suburbs, sites for manufacturing and service industries, riverfront businesses, and rural communities. Each area has its own needs, and these funds have helped us to address them for the benefit of all. These funds also have become an integral part of the budgets of counties and

municipalities alike, and loss of them would have substantial negative impacts on taxpayers, and devastating consequences in the case of some localities such as Chester.

Councilman McBlain will provide an overview of what we have been able to do in Delaware County, and I believe we have continued to meet the goals we set out when I had the privilege of serving in this Chamber.

Both Councilman McBlain and I will respond to your questions after his remarks.