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## Slot Machines And Lotteries Win Election

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The big winner of the November 2002 elections was legal gambling, particularly state lotteries and slot machines.

Arizona voters again shouted their approval of their state lottery, voting 73% - 27% to renew it for another ten years.

North Dakota and Tennessee finally gave in. The Peace Garden State, which had rejected a state lottery in 1986, voted to join the multi-state PowerBall.

The vote in Tennessee to amend the State Constitution to create a state lottery is even more significant. Legal gambling there has been off and on. Most recently, the Tennessee Legislature authorized parimutuel betting on horse races, but no track was built in time before the law automatically expired. Now that Tennessee permits a state lottery, only Hawaii and Utah are without any form of commercial or charitable gambling.

Slot machines also did very well. Arizona voters approved raising the statewide cap to 15,675 slots. In

Iowa, voters in all 11 counties, where the issue was on the ballot, said yes to keeping their casinos and racinos. A contentious battle in Idaho ended, temporarily, at the polls, when voters approved letting tribes have 3,000 Video Lottery Terminals. Lawsuits, over the question of whether VLTs are really forbidden slot machines, were already being drawn up as the votes were counted.

Gambling won big, even when it was not on the ballots. In Maryland, Rep. Robert Erlich Jr., (R.) won the governor's race, replacing rabidly anti-gambling Gov. Parris N. Glendening. Erlich has publicly stated that the state's tracks should get gaming devices, to compete against those in nearby Delaware. He defeated Kathleen Kennedy Townsend (D.), who opposed racinos.

New Yorkers reelected Gov. George Pataki (R.), who has become a strong advocate of Indian casinos and installing gaming devices at racetracks. Gambling could not lose in Pennsylvania. Both candidates for governor support the idea of racinos. The Democrat, Ed Rendell, who will even consider riverboat casinos, won.

Tribes in California should have been the biggest winners, not because their favored candidate, Gov. Gray Davis (D.) won, but because he did so poorly. Davis's number one priority has always been raising campaign money from rich contributors. Wealthy casino tribes should have been able to buy even more political power.

But the people of California had had enough. They rejected the incompetent and corrupt Davis and his Lt. Gov., Cruz Bustamante in a recall election. Tribes did nothing wrong, but Bustamante openly repeatedly violated campaign laws by taking big donations from casino tribes. The end result was the election of Arnold Schwarzenegger.

There is not much that Schwarzenegger can do legally. But he ran on a campaign depicting casino tribes as powerful special interests and his election is a mandate supporting his demand that tribes may their "fair share."

California's casino tribes have Gray Davis to thank for what they have gained, and now what they might lose, from casino gambling.

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