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**Title: Rendell touts tax cuts with gambling plan**Article Date: 17/02/2004, Source: *The Philadelphia Inquirer***Article Text:**

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Kicking off a series of events designed to rally support for his proposal to legalize slot-machine gambling, Gov. Rendell joined a half-dozen city and suburban officials yesterday to tout local tax reductions that are part of the legislation.

Appearing at the Independence Blue Cross Building in Center City, Rendell said that the 3,400 people who worked in the tower would pay \$1 million less in taxes under his proposal. By using gambling revenue to fund local governments, he said, it would reduce Philadelphia's wage tax by 14 percent for residents and 6.5 percent for nonresidents, and would reduce suburban property taxes by an average of 20 percent.

"People who work in the city of Philadelphia would be paying \$135 million a year less in wage taxes, and that money would be put into the city economy," said Rendell, standing before a chart that also illustrated the potential suburban property-tax reductions, ranging from \$323 a year in Norristown to \$447 in Bristol Township.

Yesterday's event was part of Rendell's recent efforts to take control of the gambling debate.

Though the governor and legislative leaders agree on the basic principle of raising revenue through gambling, the details have been bogged down in Harrisburg, where the two Republican-controlled chambers have passed significantly different gambling bills. Leaders of both parties also differ over issues including Indian casinos.

Now Rendell says he has taken the best of both bills to make a hybrid he hopes will pass both chambers by the end of February. He warned yesterday that a delay could mean the gambling revenues would arrive too late for tax reductions this year.

Under the proposal, the tax cuts would be paid by revenues from 12 gambling venues, including eight racetracks and four stand-alone slot parlors.

Rendell was joined by State Reps. Marie Lederer, a Philadelphia Democrat, and Melissa Murphy Weber, a Montgomery County Republican. Also in attendance were Philadelphia Controller Jonathan A. Sidel; Councilmen James F. Kenney and Michael A. Nutter; and Montgomery County Commissioner Ruth Damsker, all Democrats.

Nutter said the gambling revenues would not get in the way of tax cuts proposed by Philadelphia's Tax Reform Commission.

"There is no reason whatsoever to stop our efforts at tax reductions," he said.

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