

## Biased in favor of jobs

**CLYDE W. BARROW**

Dr. Clyde W. Barrow is director of the Center for Policy Analysis at UMass Dartmouth.

Hampshire State Legislature and, most recently, presented to the New Hampshire Gaming Study Commission.

The report concludes that if expanded gaming is authorized in New Hampshire, then Greenmeadow is a viable location — but at no point have I testified for, or against, expanded gaming or for any proposed legislation.

Second, the Greenmeadow study is similar to studies and analyses that I have prepared for the textiles and apparel, semiconductor, tourism, arts and crafts, marine science, and retail industries. By this standard, I am therefore pro-textiles, pro-semiconductor, pro-tourism, pro-arts, pro-marine science, and pro-retail industry.

No one, however, is writing stories criticizing my work on those industries or issues. In fact, when other newspapers write about my work on those issues, the stories are positive, and they often include editorials championing our work and the economic benefits these industries will bring to the state.

Third, as for charges that my research and findings on casino gaming are "biased," that also is untrue. Our research methodologies and empirical findings have been peer reviewed extensively by scholars nationwide and are published in prestigious

academic journals. If our research was biased or flawed, these shortcomings would have been publicized within academia long ago. Instead, our research and findings are recognized and cited by scholars, consultants, industry experts, and state government reports throughout the nation.

Our research and findings have been scrutinized repeatedly by other scholars, the media, industry officials, and international private consultants, and despite this critical scrutiny, our research and findings continue to be cited as authoritative and accurate.

Our methodologies are transparent, our data sources documented and public, and our findings are independently verifiable by anyone with the competence or willingness to undertake that effort. The most telling item in the Herald story is that, despite the inference of "bias," not one person is quoted stating, or documenting, that our research and findings regarding the fiscal and economic impacts of casino gaming are incorrect or inaccurate.

If critics of my work, including the reporter, bothered to read the market feasibility analysis prepared for Greenmeadow Golf Club, they would have found a substantial review of scholarly and professional literature on the social and economic costs of casino gambling. This analysis was included in the report at the request of Greenmeadow.

The critics also fail to acknowledge that my research on the prevalence of problem gambling in New England is frequently cited by problem gambling advocates. Of course, zealots and fanatics are not interested in an empirical assessment of these problems, or in policy recommendations to mitigate or regulate these problems.

Anti-gambling zealots are rabid in their unrelenting belief that anyone espousing a reasoned and impartial review of gambling must be biased in favor of gambling. That's amply demonstrated by their belief that they are on a mission to save us from ourselves. To accomplish their mission, they are equally intent on denying Massachusetts the opportunity to recapture hundreds of millions of dollars in spending by Bay Staters at the Connecticut casinos and Rhode Island slot parlors, and to stop the creation of 10,000 construction jobs and 10,000 resort casino jobs in the commonwealth.

Finally, let me note that private consulting by university faculty is allowable under the University of Massachusetts conflicts of interest policy, the faculty collective bargaining agreement, and state law. In fact, it is common among faculty at all universities. However, after examining the fiscal and economic impacts of gaming within New England since 1995, I must admit that I am biased in favor of job creation.

Only in the commonwealth, with a 9.3 percent unemployment rate, is it considered newsworthy that a professor was retained by a New Hampshire championship-level golf course to conduct a market feasibility analysis on a proposed development initiative. But if newspapers are going to report such an event as "news," then they should at least get all of the facts and report the story fairly.

First, I am not, and never have been, employed by, retained by, or paid by, a casino or gaming company. I was retained by Greenmeadow Golf Club in Hudson, N.H., which owns and operates a championship-level golf course, to conduct a market feasibility analysis. To meet local and regional demand for business meetings and tourism amenities, the company developed plans for a convention center and resort.

However, when legislation was introduced recently to authorize expanded gaming in New Hampshire, Greenmeadow executives believed that its proposed convention center and resort would benefit if gaming was added to its overall development plan. Consequently, I was retained for my recognized expertise in casino gaming to prepare 156-page market feasibility analysis.

The study was posted on the Internet, presented in public meetings of the New