

First Senatorial District Local Initiative

Should casino gambling be permitted in Rota, First Senatorial District? Yes or No.

Sufficient signatures were gathered to place a Rota casino gambling initiative on the ballot for the November 3, 2007, general election. If approved, the Rota Casino Act of 2007 would allow casino gambling in Rota and create both the Rota Casino Gaming Control Commission and the Office of the Rota Municipal Treasurer. If approved, revenues derived from the Act shall be appropriated for the benefit of the people of Rota.

Article IX, Section 1 of the N.M. I Constitution permits people of the Commonwealth to enact laws directly without action by the legislature. Article XXI of the N.M.I. Constitution permits gambling to be “established” by a senatorial district through local initiative. The Office of the Attorney General after review, has certified the Initiative placement on the November 3, 2007, election ballot. The initiative will become law if approved by two-thirds of the persons qualified to vote in Rota.

The full text of Article IX, Section 1 is reproduced here:

Section 1: Initiative. The people may enact laws by initiative.

a) An initiative petition shall contain the full text of the proposed law. If the petition proposes a general law for the Commonwealth, the petition shall be signed by at least twenty percent of the persons qualified to vote in the Commonwealth. If the petition proposes a local law that affects only the senatorial district, the petition shall be signed by at least twenty percent of the persons from the senatorial district who are qualified to vote.

b) An initiative petition shall be filed with the attorney general for certification that the requirements of section 1(a) have been met.

c) An initiative petition certified by the attorney general shall be submitted to the voters at the next regular general election that is held at least ninety days from the date the petition has been certified.

d) An initiative petition that proposes a general law for the Commonwealth shall become law if approved by two-thirds of the votes cast by persons qualified to vote in the Commonwealth. An initiative petition that proposes a local law shall become law if approved by two-thirds of the persons from the senatorial district who are qualified to vote. An initiative petition that has been approved by the voters shall take effect thirty days after the date of the election unless the petition provides otherwise.

The full text of Article XXI is reproduced here:

Section 1: Prohibition. Gambling is prohibited in the Northern Mariana Islands except as provided by Commonwealth law or established through initiative in the Commonwealth or in any senatorial district.