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ANTI-SLOT MACHINES RALLY PLANNED FOR OCTOBER 20 IN FREDERICK, MARYLAND

FREDERICK – As Maryland state politicians prepare to once again debate the legalization of slot machines, the StopSlotsMaryland coalition plans to hold several anti-slots rallies across Maryland on Saturday, October 20 at 10 AM. Rallies will be held in five locations statewide, including the Carroll Creek Amphitheatre in Frederick City.

Frederick rally organizer and local businessman Gregory Barford has invited several prominent state politicians, county commissioners, local church pastors, and the general public to attend the one-hour rally. All public figures will have an opportunity to voice their opposition to Governor O'Malley's recent announcement of his intent to legalize the use of slot machines in Maryland.

The debate over the legalization of slot machine gambling is not new in the State of Maryland. Former Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., led several unsuccessful bids to legalize them in years past. In 2005 both the House of Delegates and the State Senate finally passed bills allowing slot machines, but the two bills differed too much for compromise and they were never passed. Now, Governor Martin O'Malley has announced his intent to propose their legalization as part of his revenue-raising measures to reduce the state's deficit.

Gregory Barford says that anti-slot machine activists will gather on Saturday morning at 10:00 AM at the Carroll Creek Amphitheatre. "Slot machines hurt poor and working families," he says, "They rob families of the money they would normally have for food and other essentials and use that money to enrich out-of-state corporations." He believes that small, local businesses are

also harmed by slot machines when local residents no longer solicit their business and instead use their money on gambling.

Opponents of slot machine gambling often stress that gambling causes the “A, B, C’s” (Addiction, Bankruptcy and Crime). People can become addicted to gambling, as evidenced by the existence of groups like Gamblers Anonymous whose primary purpose is to help people control their gambling addiction. The American Psychiatric Association says between 1% and 3% of the U.S. population is addicted to gambling. Gambling can also cause an increase in bankruptcies. The most recent study by Creighton University showed that personal bankruptcy rates in counties that legalized gambling in the 1990s were 100% higher than in counties without casinos. In addition, the U.S. Department of Justice funded a study in 2004 that found significant correlations between gambling and crime.

In addition to the rally in Frederick, the StopSlotsMaryland coalition will hold concurrent rallies in Baltimore, Cumberland, Ocean City, and Prince George’s county. StopSlotsMaryland defines itself as a broad-based coalition of concerned citizens, civic groups, and religious organizations. The organization is chaired by Aaron Meisner, a financial advisor based in Baltimore.

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