

Greetings members of the Economic Forum,

You're hearing the testimony of a 17-year-old student in the valley. During quarantine, as I've read COVID economic research online, I haven't come across clear pictures of Nevada's economic situation—until I attended today's meeting. Within the first hour, I saw clearly the status of gaming as measured by the state. Thank you committee, for convening for the benefit of me and my community. Today, I'd like to share my reflections on the status of Las Vegas gaming.

At the beginning of this meeting, Gaming Board rep Mr. Lawton shared with you that consumer interest in gambling is on the decline. Currently, the pandemic is being pinned as the primary blame. But this may be a dangerous conclusion to draw—because before the pandemic, Mark Yoder, VP of business expansion at a Glendale-based gambling corporation, said that “on a national level, adults ages 21-49 are increasingly ignoring slots.” Forecast risks shared during Agenda Item 4 showed that over the past decade, total statewide gaming volume was plateauing.

As developments like Virtual Hard Rock Casino will go live, they won't attract as many people as in-person gaming would. But pandemic aside, it's clear that historical trends will likely shift due to different generations' different interests. Though it was said today that forecasting skews due to the coronavirus can be set aside as “historical relationships will hold,” this statement holds true only for the current population of patrons, who are Generation X and above. To put it bluntly, “once a gamer, always a gamer.” But for Generations Y and below, who have not had a fraction of the interest in slot machines that they've had in video games, different product offerings are needed to sustain Las Vegas' entertainment supremacy into the future.

Enter ESPORTS, the video game industry that has led Vegas casinos to commercial success since 2010, leading to facilities like Luxor's HyperX Arena. **And here's the kicker:** During the pandemic, ESPORTS was able to accommodate social isolation far better than traditional gaming, as the natural environment for video game attractions is on the Web anyways. As a result, ESPORTS pumped life-giving revenue streams to casinos this past spring, generating monies on the order of tens of millions. ESPORTS is an industry worth supporting and looking into, if Las Vegas is to remain the entertainment capital of the world into the future. Thank you.