



**NATHAN JOHNSON**  
STATE SENATOR • DISTRICT 16

**News Release**  
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## **STATE SENATOR JOHNSON FILES SJR 82 TO PUT DESTINATION GAMING RESORTS TO THE VOTERS**

**AUSTIN, Texas** – On Friday March 14<sup>th</sup>, Texas State Senator Nathan Johnson (D-Dallas) filed Senate Joint Resolution 82 (SJR 82) to put to the voters the question of whether destination resorts that include strictly regulated casino gaming should be authorized in Texas. The resolution would not itself authorize or create gaming destination resorts; it would only remove the present constitutional ban, and impose strict parameters around gaming, sports wagering, and the Texas lottery.

“Where there is a disconnect between what the Legislature will do and what the voters want, the issue may best be decided directly by voters. I filed SJR 82 to give the voters the right to decide this one. I sincerely hope my colleagues in the Senate feel the same way,” said Senator Johnson. “Polls consistently show that more than 80% of Texans want the right to vote to decide this issue. It makes sense for the Legislature to let that happen.”

In related action, Johnson also filed SJR 14 this session, to create a statewide right of initiative and referendum for Texas voters to bring any issue to the ballot.

If approved by the voters in November, SJR 82 would make it possible for the legislature to authorize and strictly regulate casino gaming and sports wagering. At a minimum, the law must:

1. Define what constitutes casino gaming and sports wagering.
2. Strictly regulate casino gaming, sports wagering, the state lottery, and bingo through an agency funded by fees and taxes on the industry.
3. Determine how and where casino gaming and sports wagering may be conducted.
4. Limit the number of casino gaming licenses.
5. Require licenses, application fees, and a gaming revenue tax on operators of casino gaming and sports wagering.

To clarify his intent, Johnson added, “I’m not promoting casino gaming with this resolution. I’m promoting the option to have it, along with my belief that – when the Legislature will not act on the issue – Texans should be able decide whether a constitutional prohibition enacted 150 years ago is relevant today.”

SJR 82 also addresses the serious issues of regulating the troubled Texas Lottery, and regulating and enforcing the law regarding the rampant, illegal, and predatory gaming market in Texas.



“Should the voters decide to change the constitution, a limited, well-regulated industry of superior destination resorts – one that operates subject to strict enforcement of the law – will bring billions of dollars in construction investments and convention and tourism business, tens of thousands of permanent jobs, and all the dynamic revenue that follows. Oh, and billions of dollars in voluntary tax revenue,” said Senator Johnson.

Johnson also highlighted the economic relevance of SJR 82. “For several sessions now the Texas Legislature has been making huge, recurring financial commitments. That’s easy to do in a time of budget surplus. But budget surpluses are not perpetual, and I believe that legislators are obliged to ensure that our revenue options in the future will allow us to meet the commitments we’ve made – and even to meet some that we *should* have been making. I’m talking about property tax reductions, teacher pay raises and education funding, water infrastructure, the grid, law enforcement, and more.

While missing out on revenue from destination tourism, Texans spend billions of vacation and tourism dollars at casinos and resorts in Oklahoma, New Mexico, Louisiana, and Nevada. Worse, they also spend billions on illegal gaming in our own state. “The state of Texas receives no benefit from this economic activity, nor do we effectively regulate it to protect consumers. I’m putting to the voters whether we should change that.”

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***About Senator Nathan Johnson:*** *Senator Nathan Johnson was re-elected in 2024 to serve a third term in the Texas Senate. He represents almost a million Dallas County residents in the growing and rapidly diversifying Senate District 16. With eight years of legislative experience, Senator Johnson serves on several key Senate committees, including Business and Commerce, Jurisprudence (Vice-Chair), Economic Development, Transportation, and Water, Agriculture & Rural Affairs.*