

Opinion: Gaming's view of other frontiers still evolving

By Jon Ralston, Las Vegas Sun

What's missed in the hyperventilating over whether Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid is making a grand payback or bowing before Caesar in his Internet poker push – hello, Occam's Razor – is how both the senator and the gamers, coincidentally, have evolved on the issue.

And how this change is so like other changes, especially for Nevada gamers who for years have fluttered about like a gaggle of Chicken Littles until they saw a lot of money to be made. For those of us who have watched this for decades, it's a striking case of déjà vu that shows just how the political elite bend to the whims of the gaming doyens and raises the age-old question: Is what's good for the big casinos always good for Nevada?

A quick review of history:

1970s – New Jersey legalizes gaming. Nevada casinos say it will kill the state. State lives. Gamers invest in New Jersey.

1980s – Domestic, foreign gaming catches on. Nevada casinos say it will kill the state. State lives. Gamers invest in other jurisdictions.

1990s – Indian gaming begins to spread. Nevada casinos say it will kill the state. State lives. Gamers invest in tribal gaming.

2000s – Chatter about new frontier of Internet gaming grows. Nevada casinos say it will kill the state. State lives. Gamers push the Strip Dream Act, authored by Reid.

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