

Casino Interests Have Spent Over \$16.5m on Lobbyists Since 2007



Patrons play craps at tables at Mohegan Sun in Uncasville, Conn.
Jessica Hill/AP

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Lady Luck ultimately determines whether or not gamblers leave the table winners or empty-pocketed losers. But, as any experienced gambler knows, it never hurts to hedge your bets.

The casinos know that, too. Mohegan Sun just [struck a deal](http://www.boston.com/business/news/2014/07/10/boston-mohegan-sun-deal-official-with-walsh-signature/jNFwlQVCoLPUtMXpGTCUTN/story.html) (<http://www.boston.com/business/news/2014/07/10/boston-mohegan-sun-deal-official-with-walsh-signature/jNFwlQVCoLPUtMXpGTCUTN/story.html>) with Boston Mayor Marty Walsh that will net the city at least \$18 million a year if the casino is built—with millions more promised in transportation and capital improvements.

But that's not the only way gambling interests are spending big money for the chance to making even more.

According to Massachusetts state records, from 2007 to 2013, over \$16.5 million was spent on lobbyists for the gambling industry. Much of that money came from the developers and property owners vying for one of the few potentially lucrative casino licenses in the state. While \$16.5 million is nothing to sneeze at, it's a drop in the bucket compared to the billions some of these casinos hope to rake in if their bids are approved.

Lobbyist spending peaked in 2011, the year Gov. Deval Patrick signed the Expanded Gaming Act into law, but has continued in 2012 and 2013.

The biggest spender is Sterling Suffolk Racecourse, which spent \$3.275 million on lobbyists between 2007 and 2013. Hall Properties, which is one of Suffolk's owners, and Caesars, which teamed up with Suffolk to build a

casino resort on the property but was [dropped from the bid last year](http://www.boston.com/metrodesk/2013/10/18/caesars-dropped-from-suffolk-downs-casino-bid/Twvc6266iJgCjldMR6ekFM/story.html) (<http://www.boston.com/metrodesk/2013/10/18/caesars-dropped-from-suffolk-downs-casino-bid/Twvc6266iJgCjldMR6ekFM/story.html>), kicked in another \$465,000 and \$218,000, respectively. The Mohegan tribe, which partnered with Suffolk after Caesars, gave nearly \$370,000 to lobbyists.

Development Associates, a subsidiary of Wynn Resorts, which hopes to build a hotel and casino in Everett, has given nearly \$1.5 million. The Mashpee Wampanoag tribe, [which wants to build a casino in Taunton](http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/2014/01/03/bia-approves-compact-that-could-lead-mashpee-wampanoag-casino-taunton/F0zuuTPsGBOpLO3SWqsjl/story.html) (<http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/2014/01/03/bia-approves-compact-that-could-lead-mashpee-wampanoag-casino-taunton/F0zuuTPsGBOpLO3SWqsjl/story.html>), has spent just over \$1.85 million.

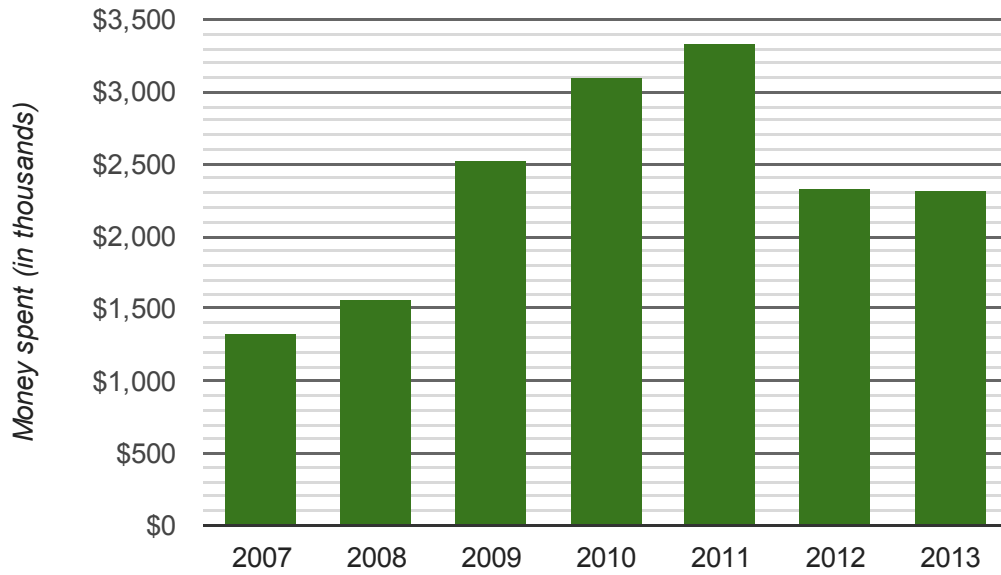
Other companies have spent smaller, but still considerable, sums to have their interests represented to state lawmakers.

Penn National, which is building a [\\$225 million slot machine parlor casino](http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/2014/02/28/gaming-commission-formally-approves-penn-national-gaming-slots-parlor-licensee-plainville/byjAUSnvwj9KzRVizM4YYI/story.html) (<http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/2014/02/28/gaming-commission-formally-approves-penn-national-gaming-slots-parlor-licensee-plainville/byjAUSnvwj9KzRVizM4YYI/story.html>) on Plainridge Racecourse, spent about \$325,000. Plainridge itself spent just under \$370,000. MGM, which won a full casino license last month (<http://www.boston.com/business/news/2014/06/13/mgm-springfield-get-state-first-casino-license/aOBzoActfouffas7QTYzDI/story.html>) and plans to build a resort in Springfield, spent \$210,000. KG Urban, which [hopes to build a casino in New Bedford](http://www.boston.com/news/local/blogs/in-the-cards/2014/01/10/federal-judge-upholds-state-casino-law/foN9nEw6JW3oXo9SK7r33L/blog.html) (<http://www.boston.com/news/local/blogs/in-the-cards/2014/01/10/federal-judge-upholds-state-casino-law/foN9nEw6JW3oXo9SK7r33L/blog.html>), shelled out \$565,000. Sheldon Adelson's Las Vegas Sands spent almost \$520,000 before deciding in 2012 not to pursue a license in the state. And the Aquinnah Wampanoag tribe spent \$120,000 before deciding to [pursue its claim in federal court](http://www.boston.com/metrodesk/2013/11/12/native-american-tribe-says-they-have-federal-approval-build-casino-martha-vineyard/kzAH46jtPW8Bc260XYlrRK/story.html) (<http://www.boston.com/metrodesk/2013/11/12/native-american-tribe-says-they-have-federal-approval-build-casino-martha-vineyard/kzAH46jtPW8Bc260XYlrRK/story.html>).

Organizations opposed to casinos have also employed lobbyists, but have spent considerably less. The Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling spent just \$20,000, while Stop Predatory Gambling paid about \$5,000 to lobbyists.

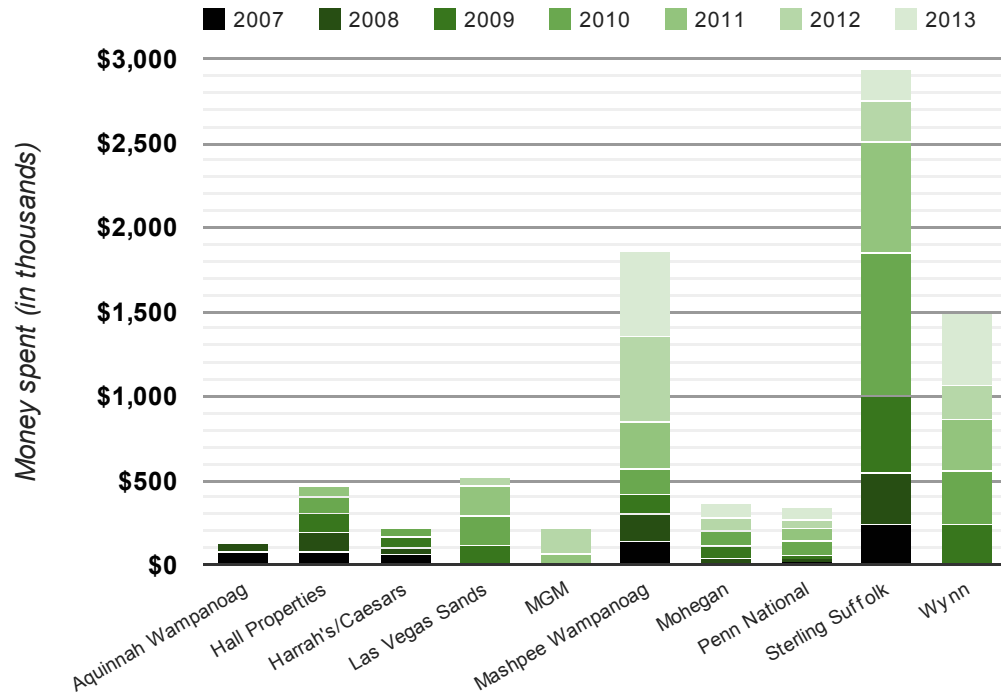
Here's a look at how much money was spent on gambling lobbyists in the state over the past six years:

Money spent on Massachusetts gambling lobby, total



Massachusetts Lobbyist Division

Money spent by select organizations, broken down by year



Massachusetts Lobbyist Division

Clearly, casinos think the money spent on lobbyists is worth the risk. After all, you can't win if you don't play.