

Is Mississippi Coming to Las Vegas?

On July 15, Harrah's Entertainment announced that it would merge with Caesars Entertainment, creating the world's largest gaming corporation with more than \$8 billion in revenues. If regulators approve the merger, the combined company will control over a quarter (25 percent) of all commercial gaming revenues in the United States – an unprecedented concentration of market power in the gaming industry.

Harrah's/Caesars' First Act: Attack Gaming Workers

Recent events in Atlantic City provide a troubling roadmap of how the new Harrah's/Caesars intends to use its dominant market power. On October 1, thousands of workers at Harrah's/Caesars' Atlantic City casinos were forced to strike after the two companies jointly refused to continue the twenty five year partnership between the union and gaming industry.

Harrah's/Caesars has responded by trying to bust the union in Atlantic City, threatening to replace all striking workers. The issues in the strike?

- Despite record profits, Harrah's/Caesars is demanding that workers choose between healthcare and wages.
- No limits on subcontracting, ensuring that future jobs in Atlantic City are low wage with few benefits.
- Keeping workers in Atlantic City and Las Vegas divided as the companies grow larger and larger.

Incredibly, the companies claim if Las Vegas and Atlantic City contracts expire in the same year, housekeepers, cooks, porters, and food servers will have too much power versus the largest gaming company in the world (despite the fact that MGM/Mirage has agreed to a contract expiring in the same year for its Las Vegas and Atlantic City properties).

The Real Agenda: Turn Las Vegas into Mississippi

By seeking to destroy the union in Atlantic City, it appears the ultimate agenda of Harrah's/Caesars is to use their new market power to roll back the gains of workers in the gaming industry. One only has to look to Mississippi – a non-union market dominated by Harrah's/Caesars – to understand the chilling future that these companies would like to impose on our communities. In Mississippi, casino workers are paid less than half of Las Vegas workers, lack basic health benefits, and have no job protection or a guaranteed work week. Is that the future we want?

Over the years the gaming industry has been extraordinary profitable in Atlantic City and Las Vegas, while maintaining a commitment to share those gains with its unionized workforce. Now, as Harrah's and Caesars grow larger, they want to break that partnership with their workers.