Mississippi leads nation in corruption when linked to legalization of gambling, according to study

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Two economists studied federal corruption conviction rates in states before and after they legalized casino gambling between the years 1985 to 2000.

Mississippi tops the list.

According to The Pew Research Center, economists Douglas M. Walker and Peter T. Calcagno analyzed the average number of corruption convictions for every 10,000 state employees. The result was four out of the five states with the highest annual rates of public corruption were casino states.

Per the report:

- Mississippi led the list with almost four public corruption convictions a year per 10,000 state employees followed by Louisiana, Illinois and South Dakota. At the same time, none of the five states with the lowest corruption rates had legalized casino gambling during the study period.

"Interestingly, when we examine the individual states' trends in per capita corruption convictions, we find the trends tend to be increasing both before and after casinos are legalized and begin operating," **they report in the journal Applied Economics**.

They give two theories for the patterns.

The increase in public corruption convictions before states approve casinos shows that the casino industry is attracted to states with what they called an existing "culture of corruption."

Secondly, the rise in public corruption convictions after legalization suggests that casino interests also are "able to capture regulators, yielding a more favorable regulatory atmosphere, but perhaps tainted by corruption."

For the complete report, **click here**.