

Coalition for Justice in Hawaiian Gardens & Jerusalem

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Hawaiian Gardens members not included because they fear retaliation

www.stopmoskowitz.org

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***NEWS!* Coalition cheers victory over stalled Hawaiian Gardens casino license application of Irving Moskowitz, urges Attorney General to investigate whether Moskowitz is sole significant funder of far-right Israeli settlers likely to violently oppose a peace deal with the Palestinians.**

January 16, 2001. After signaling imminent action for over a year, the California Attorney General's office said last week that it could not predict when it will make a decision on Irving Moskowitz's application for a permanent casino license. The Coalition for Justice welcomed news of the delay, reported Friday by KCET-TV in Los Angeles.

"With our 18-month-long letter-writing campaign, our advertisements and our outreach to hundreds of groups, we've succeeded in slowing down what could have been a rubber-stamping of the license to the careful consideration the situation demands," said Coalition Coordinator Rabbi Haim Dov Beliak.

The Coalition has submitted a brief and additional findings to California Attorney General Bill Lockyer, who will recommend denial or approval to the Gambling Control Commission. The newly constituted commission is

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expected to hold public hearings on the Moskowitz license after Lockyer issues his recommendation.

Today the Coalition wrote to Lockyer asking that he expand his legally required investigation of whether Moskowitz has the good character required for a gambling license. The letter asks Lockyer to determine what percentage of the Israeli right wing's funding Moskowitz provides. The Coalition believes there is a likelihood that Moskowitz is such a major funder of far-right and violence-prone Israeli settler groups and their US supporters that these groups would not exist without his support.

A case in point is Morton Klein, national president of the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA), who was recently quoted by a Jewish newspaper threatening to block implementation of a peace accord that included transfer of the Temple Mount to Palestinian control. Moskowitz is regarded as a major backer of the ZOA, which always stakes out maximalist positions opposing Middle East peace. The ZOA recently ran a costly series of inflammatory anti-peace ads in Jewish newspapers. There are additional examples in the letter to Lockyer.

The Coalition has only been able to access information about donations to these groups from the mammoth bingo Moskowitz runs in Hawaiian Gardens, as these donations are channeled through Moskowitz's non-profit foundation, which must by law disclose financial information. In the past, however, Moskowitz has used personal funds to support controversial and provocative Israeli activities. For example, he used non-bingo funds to finance a major part of the excavation of a tunnel to the Temple Mount, which, when it was opened in 1996, sparked protests that claimed over 70 lives.

"If Moskowitz is single-handedly fighting peace through these right-wing groups," said Coalition Coordinator Beliak, "granting him a license will make the state of California responsible for the horrific carnage that results when peace prospects disappear."

The Coalition, comprised of Jews and Latinos, is campaigning against the licensing of the casino because of

- Moskowitz's abusive treatment of Hawaiian Gardens, a poor Latino city in southeast Los Angeles County, and
- Moskowitz's use of proceeds from his Hawaiian Gardens "charitable" bingo to support violence-prone Israeli settlers fighting Israeli-Palestinian peace.

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The Coalition has been running ads in local and Jewish newspapers urging the public to write Lockyer and oppose a license for Moskowitz.

**Available: The Coalition's 1/16/01 letter to Attorney General Bill Lockyer
The news reports cited in the Lockyer letter
Interviews with Coalition Coordinator Beliak**

for background information, please see www.stopmoskowitz.org

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