



Parliament of Sint Maarten

Staten van Sint Maarten

To the Hon. Prime Minister and Minister of General Affairs
Ms. S.E. Jacobs
Government Administration Building
Philipsburg

UV/055/2020-2021

Philipsburg, November 4, 2020

Re: Questions from MP M.D. Gumbs regarding the appointment of the board for the Social Economic Council

Hon. Prime Minister,

Herewith I submit to you questions posed by Member of Parliament, Ms. M.D. Gumbs pursuant to article 62 of the Constitution and Article 69 of the Rules of Order of the Parliament of Sint Maarten.

The letter is self-explanatory.

Yours truly,

R. Brison

President of Parliament



Melissa D. Gumbs

Member of the Parliament of
Sint Maarten

Sint Maarten, 29 October 2020 29 October 2020

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President of Parliament
Mr. Rolando Brison
Wilhelminastraat 1
Philipsburg, St. Maarten

Subject: Request to the Social Economic Council (SER) to conduct a study on the socio-economic impact of the placement of lottery booths in lower-income areas and questions to the Minister of General Affairs

Dear Chairman Brison:

As the economic effects of COVID-19 continue to impact Sint Maarten, it has been noted in the community that there has been a rise in the appearance of lottery booths and kiosks from various gambling houses. The placement of these structures is done in a manner that poses an insidious risk factor to the country as a whole: the impact they have on the economic, social and mental health of the residents of the communities in which they're placed. A 2017 study by Gambling Research Exchange Ontario conducted research into the correlation between gambling and poverty. The key takeaway from the study is as follows:

"A developing body of evidence suggests that problem gambling prevalence rates are higher in populations experiencing poverty when compared to the general population. The temporal order of poverty and problem gambling remains unclear although some research suggests problem gambling precedes poverty. Disadvantage at both the individual and neighborhood level are risk factors for problem gambling. This link warrants further research to disentangle the relationship. Enhanced awareness of the link between poverty and problem gambling is required as are services and supports that are tailored to a population that has complex needs including concurrent disorders."¹

¹ Hahmann, T.E., & Matheson, Dr. F.I. (2017). Problem Gambling & Poverty. Retrieved from [https://www.greo.ca/Modules/EvidenceCentre/files/Hahmann_and_Matheson_\(2017\)_Problem_gambling_and_poverty.pdf](https://www.greo.ca/Modules/EvidenceCentre/files/Hahmann_and_Matheson_(2017)_Problem_gambling_and_poverty.pdf)

Through you, Chairman, I hereby request that you forward my request to the Minister of General Affairs, the Honorable Prime Minister Silveria Jacobs to, according to article 2 paragraph 1 of the National Ordinance of the Social Economic Council, instruct the SER to conduct a study and compile an advice on the following:

1. The number of lottery booths on island prior to Hurricanes Irma and Maria as compared to the number today (2020).
2. The socio-economic impact on the communities in which these lottery booths are placed.
3. The support available to those who may suffer from gambling addiction in these communities.

Chairman, I am aware that the SER cannot execute any requests for socio-economic research without having a fully installed board. The research conducted by the SER is invaluable to the development of our Country. The insight that members of Parliament and the Council of Ministers can gain from their reports may serve as a roadmap to the progress and growth we all want to see. That is why having SER fully structured to execute its duties is significant. Therefore I also have the following question for the Minister and request your assistance with forwarding them to the Prime Minister as per article 69 of the Rules of Order:

1. Has the Council of Ministers taken a decision on the appointment of the board for the Social Economic Council?
 - a. If not, what is the timeline for this decision?
 - b. If yes, when will the SER board be installed?

Thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter.

Respectfully,



Melissa D. Gumbs, M.I.B.

Member of Parliament

Faction Leader, Party for Progress