

Panel Celebrates 45 Years of Legalized Gaming in Atlantic City

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Atlantic City, N.J. (AP) — People who have made a life for themselves that they otherwise wouldn't have had an opportunity to do by working in an industry that provides jobs with salaries and things that they never expected in the area that existed here in 1975 said Michael C. Epps, currently a solicitor for the city, but was the first Atlantic City native to serve as a New Jersey Casino Control Commission (CCC)

Kahanov said. "The Casino Control Commission has become a standard for other states to emulate."

However, it wasn't always that way, Perskie said. In fact, the idea to bring gaming to New Jersey and Atlantic City was originally not at all popular.

"You had an industry that was considered around the rest of the country as having been organized and funded by people that you didn't want to invite to your house for dinner," said Perskie, who added that at the time Atlantic City had a series of mayors who had gone to jail for various wrongdoings.

The casino industry was considered a place for the mob, Perskie said.

"So the idea of putting casinos in Atlantic City meant that you would take a corrupt industry and put it into a corrupt city that was located in a corrupt state," he said with a laugh.

To assuage any doubts, Perskie and the rest of the panel said the state had to make it abundantly clear that the regulations were strong and enforcement was tough. And they all agreed the CCC has accomplished that goal as New Jersey's casino regulations have become the "gold standard" for other states and even countries, Plousis said.

"After New Jersey showed it could ensure the good character, honesty and integrity of the industry, public confidence, trust and credibility grew in the casino industry," he said.

Now, 46 other states have gaming, there are more 485 commercial casinos in the United States that employ close to a million people.

"So the industry started because of the good practices that Atlantic City has," Plousis said.

Perskie said he believes Atlantic City is the

