

But opponents, including church groups and community activists, hailed the vote. They had warned that an expansion of gambling would lead to a plague of social ills.

Several lawmakers said yesterday that the Senate's move to declare the proposal unconstitutional was a quick way to kill a bill that did not have the votes. The vote has no legally binding effect. That would be for the courts to decide.

"It's definitely a signal there weren't sufficient votes for all three forms of gambling to get on the ballot," said Senate Majority Leader F. Joseph Loeper (R., Delaware), adding that the vote was "a litmus test for where the rest of the issue would have gone."

Proponents—and even some critics—had been saying the votes were there to send the bill to the governor's desk. But they spoke too soon. Most senators who had been undecided as late as last week ended up voting against gambling yesterday.

The margins going into yesterday's vote were seen as too close to call.

The day opened with a strong showing by more than 100 pro-gambling demonstrators, most from the state's racetracks, who jammed the capitol's hallways carrying signs.

But gambling backers saw a bad omen early in the day when Rendell, long a supporter of riverboat gambling, pulled out of a scheduled news conference so he could keep lobbying for the bill.

Interviews with 47 of 50 senators or their aides two weeks ago showed senators were nearly tied on the issue, with nine undecided, three unreachable, and one who declined comment. Of that group, 10 voted to call the referendum unconstitutional; two voted against that finding; and one, Sen. Anthony Hardy Williams (D., Phila.), did not vote. Williams said he was upstairs in the office portion of the buildings during the vote and did not make it to the floor in time. He said he would have voted against gambling.

Some last-minute decision-makers said they receive considerable constituent input against gambling. Sen. James Gerlach (R., Chester) said he was shown a poll paid for by gambling opponents indicating that 65 percent of his district was against riverboat casinos, 65 percent against video poker, and 55 against slot machines at horse-racing tracks.

Gerlach said he voted that the bill was constitutional because he supports referendums, but added that he would have voted to defeat gambling.

"This became the quickest and least painful way to bring closure to the issue," said Stephen C. MacNett, counsel to the Senate Republicans.

Sen. Vincent Fumo (D., Phila.), who has supported riverboat gambling in the past but had worked to defeat the current bill, called it "a polite way of letting it go away."

Fumo's usually ally, Rendell, expressed frustration.

He noted that gambling is allowed in West Virginia, Delaware, New Jersey, Connecticut and New York. "I mean, we're like ostriches—we stick our heads in the sand," he said.

The vote caused friction between the two powerful men.

Rendell called Fumo's stance "a shame, because he did it for a purely political reason. He's always been a supporter of our [riverboat] legislation."

Rendell said he meant that Fumo was worried about "what gambling would do on the ballot in May to the turnout," presumably to Fumo's choice for mayor, Democrat Marty Weinberg.

Fumo rejected that assertion, saying he did not believe a referendum would have hurt Weinberg. He said he opposed it because he thought it would lose, killing chances for gambling forever.

"I don't know why he went on such a fool's errand," Fumo said of Rendell. He added that he was miffed at the mayor for calling Democratic senators.

I've delivered for him when nobody else would," Fumo said. "This just makes it harder the next time I have to do something for him."

Gaming advocates had fought for years to advance the issue and had pushed especially hard in recent months, hoping the May ballot was a window of opportunity.

Tavern owners statewide held rallies and visited lawmakers to push poker. The horse-racing industry continued its effort in the hope of bolstering its competitive position with slot-machine revenue. And riverboat companies such as President Casinos Inc., Ameristar Casinos Inc., and Epic Horizon LP added their lobbying clout.

Gaming interests and their lobbyists made political contributions totaling more than \$606,000 to Gov. Ridge and a handful of legislative leaders in the last two election cycles. In recent years, though gambling bills have met with varying degrees of success, none has been signed and advocates were hopeful that 1999 might be the year.

But Pennsylvania's antigambling lobbyists, a diverse group of religious and community interests, worked hard after the House passed the bill to have the upper chamber defeat it.

Michael Geer, president of Pennsylvanians Against Gambling Expansion, said the grassroots work done by activists in his camp had an effect.

"The reason it happened is [senators] heard the voice of the people in the state," he said.

But gambling supporters said the defeat had more to do with the way the bill was structured.

"It's difficult with three issues intertwined in the bill," said Bob Green, president of Bucks County's Philadelphia Park racetrack. "If it was just ours, it probably wouldn't have been a problem."

Calling the vote "setback," some supporters said they would be back.

"We can't just go away," Green said.

#### HISTORY OF GAMBLING BILLS

Efforts to legalize gambling in Pennsylvania have, for the most part, been unsuccessful. In 1972, Pennsylvania became the fourth state to authorize a government-sponsored lottery. Since then, things have not gone well for legalized-gambling proponents. Here's a look at the recent history:

1983: The state's worsening financial condition prompts a flurry of gambling bills, including one proposal to legalize slot machines in the Poconos to fund education statewide. Half a dozen bills that would legalize gambling await a vote by the legislature throughout the next year but go nowhere.

1985: Philadelphia City Council approves a resolution requesting the state legislature to allow the city to legalize video-poker machines. The legislature doesn't.

1988: Gov. Robert P. Casey signs a bill allowing nonprofit organizations to raise funds through small games of chance, such as "punchboards." He vetoes a bill to authorize off-track-betting facilities, but the legislature overrides his veto and the bill becomes law.

1989: The State Horse Racing Commission approves the first application for an off-track-betting outlet, in Reading.

1990: Casey vetoes a bill that would have legalized gambling on video-poker machines in bars, restaurants and clubs.

1991: The House rejects a riverboat-gambling bill, which Casey had promised to veto.

1994: Gov.-elect Ridge promises to veto any bill that would legalize riverboat gambling without first submitting the issue to voters in a nonbinding statewide referendum. Proponents push without success to win passage of a bill that would authorize a referendum.

1997: The Senate passes a bill that would allow slot machines at horse-racing tracks, but it fails to gain House approval.

Feb. 10, 1999: The House passes a bill that would authorize nonbinding statewide referendums on slots, riverboats and video poker on the May 18 primary ballot.

March 8, 1999: The Senate votes to declare the House bill unconstitutional, killing the effort to place the referendums on the primary ballot.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

#### BALTIMORE ORIOLES TO PLAY EXHIBITION GAME IN HAVANA, CUBA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, this Nation and baseball lovers around the world mourned the passing of the Yankee Clipper. Joe DiMaggio's career was certainly brilliant and worthy of the praise and the eulogies we have heard these past few days. As a testament to his career, many people who never saw him swing a bat or steal a base felt a sense of loss, a loss felt not only for the man but for the institution that he so nobly represented, the game of baseball.

Baseball, Mr. Speaker, transcends generations. The names of Ruth, Gehrig, Mantle and Aaron are as familiar to baseball fans of today as they were during their playing days.

Baseball also transcends borders, Mr. Speaker. The passion we Americans have for the game of baseball is not confined to this nation. That same passion can be found in many parts of the globe, including the nation of Cuba.

On March 28, the Baltimore Orioles will travel to Havana, Cuba, in pursuit of that passion.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Baltimore, MD (Mr. CUMMINGS).

Mr. CUMMINGS. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Baltimore Orioles' goodwill mission to Cuba. In the past year we have witnessed several historic events that are significant to the evolving debate surrounding Cuba, its citizens and United States efforts to promote democracy.