

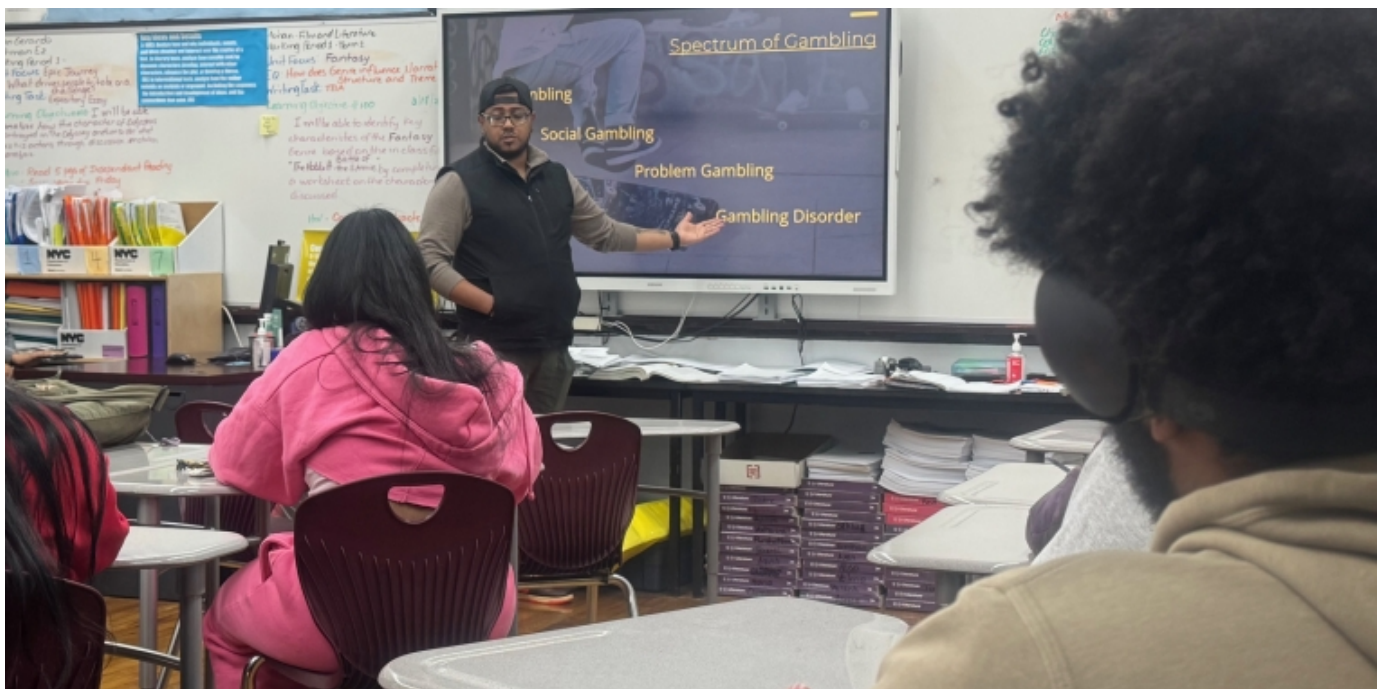


NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## Senator Addabbo Hosts Problem Gambling Awareness Month Event for Students at Richmond Hill High School

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR. March 25, 2025



Robin Singh of NYCPG explains key elements of gambling addiction and how to get help.

In recognition of March as Problem Gambling Awareness Month, Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr., the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Gaming, Racing and Wagering, partnered with the New York Council on Problem Gambling (NYCPG) and The Safe Foundation to host educational sessions on March 18, 2025, at Richmond Hill High School for its students only, regarding the dangers of gambling addiction.

"Educating our youth about the dangers of gambling addiction is not just a responsibility; it's an investment in their future," Addabbo said. "By fostering awareness and understanding, we help them to make informed choices and protect themselves from the pitfalls of addiction that can crush their dreams."

The representatives took over two health classes, presenting important information and sharing real life experiences with over 60 students. Robin Singh, the Team Leader of the Queens Problem Gambling Resource Center of NYCPG gave an overview of gambling addiction, such as warning signs and resources to get help. Alcee James, the NYC Director of the resource center was also on hand to provide support. Ike Dweck, the Founder and CEO of The Safe Foundation shared his personal stories as a recovering gambling addict.

Singh began simply by explaining the definition of gambling, which is when someone risks something of value on a game of chance in the hopes of a desired reward, whereas problem gambling causes detrimental complications in someone's life, such as when a person lies or steals to pay off debt or loses money they intended to use to pay their bills or their rent.

"The only way not to lose is not to play," Singh advised.

Singh also went over the "spectrum of gambling," which increases in severity starting from no gambling to social gambling to problem gambling and ending with gambling disorder. The balance between social gambling and problem gambling can overlap in areas such as the reason for gambling, expectations, treatment of time and money, reaction to loss and level of disclosure.

Dweck who referred to his past self as a "degenerate gambler," shared personal stories of how he, at one time, owed the mafia \$20,000 which took him 10 years to pay off in weekly installments of \$500. He spoke about still attending Gamblers Anonymous meetings today

even though he hasn't placed a bet since November 3, 1987. After he quit gambling, he eventually found success owning and operating several sneaker stores before going on to help others by founding The Safe Foundation, which he said has helped 9,435 people with drug, alcohol and gambling issues.

"There are no shortcuts in life," Dweck said. "You can't win gambling."

Senator Addabbo would like to thank the NYCPG, Safe Foundation and Richmond Hill High School for coming together for the benefit of educating youth about the dangers of gambling addiction.