



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Frank Padavan

Padavan: "New York Making Bad Bets For The Future With Increased Gambling"

FRANK PADAVAN March 15, 2010

New York State Senator Frank Padavan (Queens) today came out in sharp opposition to the rise of gambling contained in the Executive Budget proposal and with the troubling trend that continues to grow with a reliance on array of gambling options in all reaches of New York. Padavan is the leading opponent of gambling in the New York State Legislature and is the author of numerous reports on compulsive and problem gambling in the state including "All Gambling, All The Time" and "Quick Draw: Time To Pull The Plug".

The 2010-2011 Executive Budget proposal calls for the elimination of restrictions and the permanent extension of Quick Draw. Specifically, the proposal calls for the lifting of the restrictions on hours of operation, food sales and the size of establishment eligible to operate the game. The 2009-2010 Executive Budget also calls for the removal of any operating hour restrictions for video lottery terminals (VLT's). Currently, VLT's are restricted to operating 16 hours per day with a 2:00 am curfew.

"Who bears a major responsibility for putting New York at the top of the list in terms of citizens with gambling problems- the state itself," Padavan said. "In short, we have turned from the Empire State to the Gambling State. New York must end its practice of state-sponsored and state supported gambling. Simply put, New York continues to make bad bets

for our future with increase gambling option and opportunities.”

“Lotteries, scratch-off’s, multi-state lottery games like Mega-Millions and Powerball, Quick Draw, OTB, VLT’s and racinos and casinos represent over at least \$50 billion in the amount spent by New Yorkers. As more VLT locations come online this sum will certainly grow significantly and so will the troubling trend of problem gambling and gambling addictions. It all it adds up to more trouble for New York,” Padavan said.

“Economists have argued that gambling at best is a zero-sum game - meaning that the impact on the state economy as a result of the social costs, increased crime, disruption of non-gambling business sector and overall job loss produces a net loss. As a matter of fact an economist from the University of Illinois concluded that for every \$1 that gambling contributes it cost taxpayers at least \$3,” Padavan said.

“But, despite all the warning signs and evidence to the contrary, what is the state’s latest response as outlined in the budget submitted by the Governor and other actions under consideration – you guessed it- more of the same, more gambling. The elimination of all restrictions on Quick Draw (ie food sale, hours of operation, and size of facility) will lead to the gambling game at almost every place you can imagine. The removal of restrictions on operating of hours of VLT’s will lead New York to become Vegas East with twenty-four hour a day slot machine venues.”

Senator Padavan cited a 2006 New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) Household Survey that outlined the impact problem and compulsive gambling has on New York. The report details that 5 percent of adults face a gambling problem in New York with an astounding 10 percent of adolescents facing a gambling problem. Moreover the report found that another 10 percent of adolescents were “at-risk” of developing a gambling problem.

“Just last week, the New York Council on Problem Gambling urged the gambling industry in the state to suspend for one week during National Problem Gambling Awareness Week, all advertisements promoting gambling and in turn donate all funds that would have been used to help raise awareness about problem gambling. It’s a smart and sensible move for the Council to call upon the industry to do their part to at least lessen the problem gambling epidemic in New York. Sadly it’s no surprise their call has been met with silence. There is a powerful message in the 2006 OASAS Household Survey Report that the gambling industry in New York is just not hearing,” Padavan said.

“More than one million New Yorkers from all age groups suffer from a gambling addiction and related problems. They in turn cause million more to feel the impact from problem gambling. It’s a dangerous slippery slope that has a devastating effect on local economies, families and the quality of life in our communities. With economic challenges facing so many families and the enticement of gambling as a way to help its time to stop the trend and end the prolific rise of gambling in New York before it’s too late,” Padavan said.