



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Bonacic

Bonacic Plans Hearings on Casino Development and Racing Industry in New York

JOHN J. BONACIC July 8, 2011

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Chairman of Both Senate Judiciary Committee and Senate Racing, Wagering and Gaming Committee Plans Effort to offer Constitutional Amendment on Casino Gaming; and Legislation to Enhance the Racing Industry

Now that the Legislature has adjourned, State Senator John J. Bonacic (R/C/I – Orange County), has stated he intends to hold hearings relating to both a Constitutional amendment for casino gaming and horse racing in New York State.

“Whether we agree with every action taken or not, under the leadership of Governor Cuomo and the Senate Majority Leader Skelos, New York has changed for the better. I want to build on that energy during the off-session to develop proposals which are capable of passing both the Assembly and Senate relating to both private casino gaming development and improvements to New York’s horse racing industry,” Senator Bonacic said.

Among the dozen issues Bonacic indicated he was initially contemplating include:

1. Where is casino gaming desired across New York State?
2. Who has an interest in developing private sector casino gaming in New York?
3. Should we end efforts to attract Native American casinos and focus instead on private sector casino development?
4. What would be the impact of private sector casino development in Western New York with respect to State’s existing agreement with the Seneca Nation?
5. Where should an expansion of casino gaming be permitted?

6. What requirements, if any, should there be to benefit the horse racing industry?
7. Can the racing franchise at State owned tracks be legally taken from NYRA?
8. Should New York State require out of State Advanced Deposit Wagering (ADW) systems to pay the same statutory Commissions as in-state ADWs?
9. Should OTBs be able to accumulate millions in cash on hand without returning it to their regions?
10. Which OTBs are innovating?
11. Why should all OTBs not be forced into a statutory merger?
12. How can New York help the agricultural aspects of horse breeding and training in New York State?

The two Senate Committees Bonacic chairs are both essential relating to casino gaming. He is Chairman of both the Senate Committee on Racing, Wagering and Gaming which has jurisdiction over all gaming related matters. He is also Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, which, in addition to being responsible for Court related matters and amendments to laws effecting trial practice, the Judiciary Committee also has oversight of all Constitutional Amendments – including the amendment necessary to authorize casino gaming. At least one of the hearings will be a joint hearing between both the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Senate Racing, Wagering and Gaming Committee.

Earlier this year, Bonacic met with Federal officials in Washington D.C. on the now denied application for a casino to be owned by the Stockbridge-Munsee Nation. The Federal Government denied the application, but have since repealed the “commutability” standard which served as a legal basis of the denial.

“After meeting with Federal officials, it became clear to me that the path to casino gaming in New York would most likely end in Washington. If those Federal officials want to show some sign to the contrary, it would be welcome, but we cannot wait for Washington,” Senator Bonacic said.

The Senator indicated he would most likely seek to hold a hearing in the Capital Region, one in Western New York and one in the New York City or Long Island in the months of August and September.

In the meantime, Senator Bonacic indicated he would be developing legislation to be commented on during the hearing process.

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