



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kathleen A. Marchione

Senator Marchione Supports "Casino Gaming Transparency Act"

KATHLEEN A. MARCHIONE March 11, 2013

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This morning I stood with my colleagues in the state Legislature, Assembly Minority Leader Pro Tem Tony Jordan and Assemblyman Jim Tedisco, as we unveiled -- and advocated for -- new legislation, the "Casino Gaming Transparency Act," at a press conference in Saratoga Springs. The Act would help shed light on the Governor's casino siting process and add important protections and assurances to the communities that currently host horse racing and VLT gaming.

The Act would force transparency in the Governor's now secretive casino siting process, which employs a panel consisting of handpicked appointees to make decisions where casinos would be placed throughout the state. To make casino gaming legal in New York, voters would have to approve an amendment to the State Constitution, but will not be given any notice to where these casinos would be hosted. The Casino Gaming Transparency Act identifies where the casinos can be located before voters make the decision at the polls.

The Casino Gaming Transparency Act would require that full table gaming be brought to Video Lottery Terminal (VLT) gaming facilities already licensed since September 1, 2011, like the City of Saratoga Springs, before the establishment of a new casino elsewhere. A portion of profits from these new casinos would be directed to the thoroughbred racing industry in a similar arrangement with VLTs at Aqueduct.

I believe that Saratoga Casino and Raceway is the logical, practical and economical choice as a location for a full casino. Frankly, it's the best choice. Saratoga Casino and Raceway is an already established, premier destination that has delivered critical funding for education aid and helped keep our local harness racing industry alive through enhanced purses and support for breeders.

Casino expansion at Saratoga Casino and Raceway is a win-win-win: it would mean continued financial support for education, the racing industry and our regional agriculture sector, which is a vital part of Saratoga County and the 43rd Senate District. I have already gone on record with my Senate colleagues in urging the State to designate Saratoga Casino and Raceway as a full casino site if gaming expansion goes forward. I support the Casino Gaming Transparency Act because it would strengthen this cause by ensuring that existing VLT facilities, such as Saratoga Casino and Raceway, are the choice for any casino expansion. The bill also would provide that a portion of profits from these new casinos be directed to the thoroughbred racing industry, which is critically important for Saratoga.

The Casino Gaming Transparency Act is also supported by the New York Thoroughbred Breeders, Inc. (NYTB). A recent economic impact study by the New York Horse Racing & Agriculture Industry Alliance indicates that equine racing has a \$4.2 billion impact on the state's economy. The industry supports 33,000 jobs across all 62 counties in the state, with every 100 horses providing roughly 80 jobs for New Yorkers. The Saratoga Race Course, Saratoga Casino and Raceway and other related businesses combined employ over 3,000 people annually and generate nearly \$250 million in economic activity.