



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael F. Nozzolio

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MICHAEL F. NOZZOLIO June 19, 2013

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Continuing his strong commitment to New York's hardworking taxpayers, State Senator Mike Nozzolio today announced the adoption of legislation, S.996, in the State Senate that he co-sponsored to prohibit the purchase of alcoholic beverages, tobacco products or lottery tickets with public assistance benefits. "Public assistance was designed to help needy families provide for their children until they transition back to the workforce and become self-sufficient. It was never designed or intended to be used to purchase items such as alcohol, tobacco products, or lottery tickets," said Senator Mike Nozzolio.

Additionally, this measure would also prevent individuals from using an EBT card to make ATM withdrawals from certain places, including liquor stores, casinos and adult entertainment clubs.

EBT cards work like a debit card for welfare recipients. This card contains both Food Stamps and Cash Assistance. Food Stamps have strict regulations on what can be purchased, Cash Assistance does not. Cash Assistance is intended for items that can't be purchased using food stamps, like soap, toothpaste, school supplies and toiletries. However, recipients can also legally use this cash assistance to buy cigarettes and beer, or even to fund an afternoon at the racetrack or an evening at an adult entertainment club. Currently, there are no laws or regulations against using taxpayer dollars for alcohol, tobacco, lottery tickets or gambling.

"It is critical that we reform the public assistance system to stop individuals who take advantage of these programs and ensure that they are only used to help people who are truly in need. As State Senator, I have continuously advocated for and helped to enact serious welfare reform laws to ensure accountability, encourage both personal and parental responsibility, and reduce fraud and abuse in the system. It is my hope that the Assembly will act without delay to enact this important measure," said Senator Mike Nozzolio.

Please click [HERE](#) to view a video of Senator Nozzolio's recent comments on this legislation.
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