



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## Legislation co-sponsored by Addabbo to protect the privacy of New York State Lottery winners passes Senate and Assembly

SENATOR JOSEPH P. ADDABBO, JR. July 10, 2018

| ISSUE: **LOTTERY, ADDABBO**

Both the State Senate and Assembly have now approved legislation (S.219) co-sponsored by NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. that will protect New York State Lottery winners from potential physical harm or fraudulent business practices by prohibiting the Lottery from releasing their names without their express consent.

“While you may have to be ‘in it to win it,’ hitting the NYS Lottery jackpot shouldn’t also immediately mean that your name and hometown will be splashed all over the front pages and the nightly news,” said Addabbo. “Some announced lottery winners have become the victims of violent crime or been swindled by unscrupulous people posing as financial advisors or wealth managers. People holding winning tickets should have the option of remaining anonymous to protect their privacy and to avoid harm.”

Noting that the lottery privacy legislation is very similar to a bill (S.5466) he introduced last year, Addabbo explained that the State Lottery now generally requires that the names and cities of prize claimants be publicly disclosed, and that winners participate in media announcements. The reasoning is that the Lottery is a government agency, that prizes are public funds, and that the identities of winners should therefore be disclosed. Under this bill, holders of winning tickets may remain anonymous by submitting a written request to the

Lottery that the information be withheld from the public.

“Even if the Lottery doesn’t disclose the street addresses and phone numbers of winners, this kind of basic information is easily found online if someone is willing to look for it or pay what is usually a small fee,” said Addabbo, who is the ranking member of the Senate Committee on Racing, Gaming and Wagering. “That’s why Lottery winners should have the option of protecting themselves from possible physical or financial harm by requesting that they remain anonymous. The agency itself will have all of the identifying information it needs to administer the program and responsibly disburse the funds.”

There have been instances throughout the United States in recent years where lottery prizewinners have been murdered by family members or people who befriended them after the news of their sudden wealth became public. States that already allow lottery winners to remain anonymous in all or some circumstances are Maryland, Delaware, Kansas, North Dakota, Ohio, Georgia and South Carolina. Georgia allows anonymity for those who win in excess of \$250,000.

“Now that the lottery privacy bill has been approved by the Senate and Assembly, I hope Governor Cuomo will sign it into law and implement a system where the integrity of the New York State Lottery can be maintained and the privacy and safety of winners can be protected,” said Addabbo.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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**2017-S219**

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- Introduced
  - ◦ In Committee Assembly
    - In Committee Senate
  - ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
    - On Floor Calendar Senate
  - ◦ Passed Assembly
    - Passed Senate
  - Vetoed By Governor
  - Signed By Governor
  -

Permits state lottery winners to remain anonymous to the general public

December 30, 2016

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by **Kathleen A. Marchione**

Do you support this bill?