



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo and Picente: Golf course assessment legislation is out of bounds

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO April 23, 2019



NEW YORK MILLS – State Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-I-C-Rome, and Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente Jr. were joined by owners and representatives of area golf courses today at Twin Ponds Golf and Country Club to voice their concerns with legislation that would change how certain golf courses are assessed.

The legislation (S4420) would allow local taxing jurisdictions such as counties and municipalities to assess privately and family-owned golf courses based on the property's

“highest and best use rather than its current use.” This means that golf courses consisting of fairways and greens could be considered residential developments and assessed at much higher rates.

If the legislation were to be enacted, the owners of these local golf courses – many of whom are already facing significant financial pressures - could face higher taxes on their properties and in turn raise prices to offset the tax increase. Some estimates indicate that golf courses could pay four to 10 times their current tax rate.

Even worse, courses could be forced to close their doors, resulting in a loss of jobs for employees and opportunities to attract visitors to the region.

Municipal courses such as Valley View Golf Course in Utica would not be affected.

Besides being an enjoyable pastime for many, golf is a major contributor to New York State’s economy. According to We Are Golf, a coalition of golf’s leading organizations including the Golf Course Superintendents Association, National Golf Course Owners Association, PGA TOUR, PGA of America, USGA, U.S. Golf Manufacturers Council and World Golf Foundation, golf has a \$5.3 billion economic output and provides employment for 56,594 people in the state.

Sen. Griffo is calling on members of the state Senate to reject the legislation because of the detrimental impact it could have on the state’s golf courses.

Sen. Griffo said, “Golf courses in the Mohawk Valley and the North Country, like many small businesses in New York State, are already faced with numerous fiscal challenges. This legislation will only burden these businesses more. Instead of putting up barriers and obstacles that will impede their ability to be successful, we should be doing whatever we can to make it easier for the owners of these golf courses, as with every other industry in New York, to thrive. I am hopeful that the sponsors of this legislation will see how much their idea

could adversely affect small businesses and communities throughout the state.”

Oneida County Executive Picente said, “This legislation will be a small business killer that will cost this community greatly. Family-owned golf courses such as Twin Ponds could be forced to pay four to 10 times the amount of taxes they do now. These golf courses are small businesses run by Oneida county families who employ Oneida county workers while attracting visitors from all over the region. This legislation would make it impossible for them to continue to operate. I urge those sponsoring this legislation to fully consider the ill effects it will have on communities like ours.”

New York State Golf Association Executive Director Bill Moore said, "The New York State Golf Association is opposed to any legislation that makes the game of golf more expensive. A tax increase would not only negatively impact golfers and small business owners, but would likely result in lost jobs for both full time and seasonal employees and have a negative impact on the local and state economy."