



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo, Buttenschon and Miller: Vernon Downs bill signed by governor

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO October 16, 2023

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Photo courtesy of WKTV

New York State Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-C-Rome, Assemblywoman Marianne Buttenschon, D-C-Marcy, and Assemblyman Brian Miller, R-C-New Hartford, announced today that the governor has signed into law legislation that will help Vernon Downs Casino Hotel in Vernon.

Current law mandates that Vernon Downs forfeit its additional vendor fee because it was not able to maintain at least 90% of full-time equivalent employees as they employed in 2016. Given the economic hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the facility could not feasibly maintain those employment levels.

The legislation (S4817/A6144A) signed into law would waive this condition and allow the facility to continue to operate.

Sen. Griffo, who has successfully led efforts to provide relief for Vernon Downs in the past, advocated for and was a cosponsor of the Senate bill, which was introduced by Sen. Joseph Addabbo, D-Queens and chair of the Senate's Racing, Gaming and Wagering Committee.

The Assembly bill was sponsored by Assemblyman Gary Pretlow, D-Mount Vernon and chair of the Assembly's Committee on Racing and Wagering and cosponsored by Assemblywoman Buttenschon. Assemblyman Miller also supports it.

"I am pleased that the governor has signed this legislation into law and that Vernon Downs will receive additional support and assistance," **Sen. Griffo said.** "Vernon Downs is an important component of the Mohawk Valley and Central New York, employing hundreds of people, attracting visitors and contributing to the local, regional and state economies. This legislation will help the venue continue to operate and will provide some much-needed relief to the employees, families, local governments and others who depend on Vernon Downs."

"Vernon Downs is a vital component of our local economy, from the great people that work at the facility to the secondary impacts to our small businesses," **Assemblywoman Buttenschon said.** "I co-sponsored this legislation and worked with the Chair Pretlow and the governor's office this past session to create this legislation that would support Vernon Downs and the community. I appreciate the governor's insight on the importance of this legislation for the

Mohawk Valley's economy to continue to thrive.”

“I want to thank Governor Hochul for signing this important piece of legislation, which will protect the economic activity and ancillary agricultural business that Vernon Down generates,” **Assemblyman Miller**. “It will also provide the families of workers at Vernon Downs with stability moving forward as well as the community it benefits. Thank you to the Senate and Assembly for making this possible.”