



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## Addabbo and Woerner Announce Passage of Legislation Prohibiting Online Sweepstakes Games Tied to Illegal Gambling Markets

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR. June 25, 2025

(Queens, NY) June 12, 2025: NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr., Chair of the Senate Committee on Racing, Gaming and Wagering, and Assemblymember Carrie Woerner, Chair of that house's Racing and Wagering Committee, announced the passage of their respective bills, S.5935A/A.6745A aimed at shutting down illegal online sweepstakes-style gambling operations. Both legislators are now urging Governor Hochul to sign the bill into law.

This legislation prohibits the operation and promotion of illegal online sweepstakes games that mimic gambling and are often used to circumvent New York's gaming laws. These unregulated games have surged in popularity across illegal online platforms, targeting minors and vulnerable individuals while eluding consumer protections, responsible gaming protocols, and state oversight.

"Unregulated online sweepstakes games are designed to look and feel like legitimate gambling platforms, but they are operating outside the law, since New York has not legalized nor regulated online casino games yet," said Senator Addabbo. "These illegal sites prey on youth, problem gamblers, and everyday New Yorkers, while diverting millions in potential revenue away from legal, taxed, and regulated gaming entities in our state."

The legislation prohibits the operation of these illegal, deceptive platforms and implements enforcement mechanisms, including fines and penalties. If enacted into law, all fines collected would be directed to support problem gambling prevention, education, and treatment programs throughout New York.

“This bill makes it clear online ‘sweepstakes casinos’ that use dual currency systems, meaning they allow players to purchase virtual coins redeemable for real money, and simulate casino games such as slot machines and poker, with no oversight or safeguards for minors, are illegal in New York”, said Assemblywoman Woerner. “I’m happy to have worked with Senator Addabbo on this impactful legislation, that addresses these illegal online platforms that can so easily turn minors into problem gamblers and unregulated profits into money laundering operations, threatening the legal gaming industry in our state. As the Chair of the Assembly’s Racing and Wagering Committee, I am committed to providing safeguards and key protections to our state’s vulnerable consumers and I am proud that the penalties this bill imposes on this entertainment industry’s bad actors will be directed toward problem gambling education and treatment.”

“Illegal markets not only jeopardize public safety and financial security, but they also erode trust in the legal gaming framework we’ve worked hard to build. By cutting off this flow of unlawful sweepstakes revenue and redirecting penalties into treatment services, we’re sending a clear message that New York will protect its residents while investing in programs for those struggling with gambling addiction,” Addabbo articulated. “While I intend to continue working on advancing safe, responsible, and regulated gaming opportunities, including online casino games, that benefit New York residents and the state’s economy, I am proud of the work done alongside my colleague Assemblymember Woerner and anticipate the Governor’s approval of our measure to eliminate unsafe, illegal gaming sites in our state.” concluded Addabbo.

The legislation now makes its way to Governor Hochul for her consideration for approval.