



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Malcolm Smith

Senate Democrats Bring New Life To NYC Off-Track-Betting

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New Legislation saves more than 1500 jobs

ALBANY, NY – June 16, 2008 – Senate Democrats have come to the rescue for more than 1500 workers of New York City Off-Track-Betting (NYC OTB) by voting unanimously to pass legislation to avoid shutting down the organization and approving a state takeover of the facilities.

State lawmakers passed a measure today creating an entity called the NYC OTB, a public benefit corporation. NYC OTB will continue to broadcast races on cable television (Channels 71 and 73) for three years.

The new corporation will have oversight of the 68 OTB parlors located throughout the City of New York. The NYC OTB will operate substantially under the same statutory structure as the prior organization and will honor the same terms and conditions in existing collective bargaining agreements. NYC OTB will pay the city government several millions of dollars per year during the term of this agreement.

“This is a win-win-win for New York City residents, government and OTB workers,” said Senate Democratic Leader Malcolm A. Smith (D-St. Albans). “Tens of millions of dollars and people’s livelihood were at risk. Governor Paterson and his staff demonstrated creativity and leadership during this process. The Mayor should also be commended for pressing the city’s agenda in the best interest of its residents. Accommodating so many interested parties is never easy but I believe this is a great solution for New York’s racing community.”

The Democratic members of the Senate Racing, Gaming and Wagering Committee hailed the agreement.

Senator John Sabini (D-Queens), Ranking member of the Senate Racing, Gaming and Wagering Committee, and a recent appointee as a senior advisor on racing to Gov. David Paterson said: "It is an honor that Governor Paterson has chosen me to take on the challenges of the administration as they relate to the racing and gaming industry. I look forward to helping the administration find new ways to maximize revenue for taxpayers through racing and Native American gaming including the NYC OTB and, at the same time, ensuring the integrity of an industry that is so important to our state."

Senator George Onorato (D-Queens) said: “This agreement can be seen in many ways as a winning trifecta: it’s good for the city, it’s good for the state, and it’s good for the 1,500 NYC OTB workers who would otherwise have lost their jobs. I commend Governor Paterson, Mayor Bloomberg and my legislative colleagues for their hard work in fashioning this workable and sensible solution to an issue of great importance to working New Yorkers, our state’s racing industry, and our economy as a whole.”

Senator William T. Stachowski (D-Buffalo), Ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee and a member of the Racing, Gaming and Wagering Committee said: “While I’m happy that we were able to take the appropriate action to save 1,500 people from losing their jobs, I’m especially pleased that this legislation creates a task force that will look at ways of reforming and improving OTB, to help ensure that local communities receive their fair share of revenues generated by wagering activity. Improved accountability and financial transparency ultimately benefit all of the people of our state.”