



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Frank Padavan

## Padavan Opposes Expansion VLT's In New York

FRANK PADAVAN February 13, 2008

New York State Senator Frank Padavan (Queens) voted against legislation in the State Senate yesterday that greatly expands gambling in Queens and throughout the state. Senator Padavan's major point of opposition to the legislation is the establishment of over 4,500 new video lottery terminals (VLT's) at Aqueduct Racetrack. Revenue from these VLT's will help fund a \$105 million bankruptcy bailout for the New York Racing Association.

"I opposed this legislation based on the fact it will contribute to the explosion of gambling here in Queens and throughout New York," Padavan, the leading opponent of gambling in New York State Legislature, said. "Make no mistake, this legislation sets a dangerous precedent and opens the door to more VLT's here in Queens. We have already seen the Governor's reliance on gambling revenue in his Executive Budget with the proposed establishment of VLT's at Belmont Racetrack. I stand in steadfast opposition to placing VLT's in our community. As I have said before, we are only gambling our future away if these proposals are enacted."

Padavan, the author of multiple reports dealing with gambling in New York including the 2004 "All Gambling All the Time," stressed that the legalization of VLT's has led to the creation of mini-casino's, or "racinos" in New York. These racinos and VLT's have contributed to one of the largest problems facing New York as indicated by the New York State Council on Problem Gambling: New York State has the highest rate of problem gambling in the

country.

Senator Padavan's opposition to VLT's and other gambling expansion proposals contained in the Executive Budget takes on renewed and increased importance with the release of two reports, late last year, by the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) on adolescent and adult gambling. The most troubling and startling finding in the report states that 10 percent or an estimated 140,000 adolescents are dealing with a gambling problem. Another 10 percent, an additional 140,000 adolescents are reported as "at risk" of developing a gambling problem.

"Many reports have shown that the most addictive form of gambling is video gambling or VLT's," Padavan said. "Even the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) has raised a red flag with the growth of compulsive and problem gambling in our state. We should be focusing our efforts at creating solutions to the epidemic of compulsive gambling in New York, not feeding into the problem as the NYRA legislative deal and gambling proposals in the Executive Budget do."