



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Frank Padavan

Padavan Strongly Opposes Expansion Of Gambling In Governor's Executive Budget

FRANK PADAVAN January 23, 2008

New York Senator Frank Padavan (Queens), the New York State Legislature's leading opponent of gambling, strongly opposes the massive increase in gambling provisions in the 2008-09 Executive Budget. The Governor's proposed spending plan for the upcoming state fiscal year, starting on April 1, calls for a privatization plan of the NYS Lottery, video lottery terminals (VLT's) at nearby Belmont Racetrack and the expansion of Quick Draw.

"I am adamantly opposed to the Governor's plan to privatize and sell off a portion of lottery revenues," Padavan said. "For the Governor to champion such a risky fiscal scheme is troublesome on many levels. Anyone who buys the lottery funds would do everything they can to turn a profit and that will ultimately lead to an increase in the games offered by the Lottery. We already have \$20 scratch off games readily available. What's next \$50, \$100 scratch off games everywhere we turn? In the long term the Governor's Lottery privatization plan is something New Yorkers simply just can't afford."

Authorization for Quick Draw is set to expire on May 31, 2008; however, the Executive Budget permanently authorizes the operation of Quick Draw throughout the state. Additionally, the Executive Budget lifts the restrictions on hours of operation, food sales and the size of the establishment eligible to operate the game.

“VLT’s at Belmont and the expansion of Quick Draw will only open the flood gates to a prolific rise of problem gambling. I stand in steadfast opposition to placing VLT’s in our community. We are only gambling our future away if these proposals are enacted.” Padavan said.

“Revenues for the state from these streams of gambling are a false promise,” Padavan said. “These proposals are not creating solutions. They will only lead to more problems. Gambling sends thousands throughout New York into financial despair each year. At the end of the day, each of these proposals will open the door to more long-term problems for many families and communities facing compulsive gambling.”

Senator Padavan’s opposition to the proposed massive expansion of gambling in the Executive Budget takes on increased importance with the recent release of two reports 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.

On January 15, Senator Padavan met with NYS OASAS Commissioner Karen M. Carpenter-Palumbo to discuss the rise of problem gambling throughout New York. During the meeting, Commissioner Carpenter-Palumbo stressed the need for additional funding for treatment services for those faced with an addiction to gambling.

“We have a serious problem in our state with the growing epidemic of problem and compulsive gambling affecting our youth,” Padavan said. “The findings in the OASAS report should serve as a wake up call; instead the Governor is moving forward with a proliferation of gambling in our state. We need to be proactively working to stop this trend of problem gambling facing all ages and walks of life. This Executive Budget fails to achieve this goal

and only contributes to the slippery slope that is gambling in New York State.”