



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George D. Maziarz

Public Assistance Integrity Act approved in Senate

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Senator George Maziarz is pleased to announce that the Public Assistance Integrity Act (S.966) was approved today in the State Senate by a wide margin of 53-4.

The bill would prohibit the use of Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards at casinos, liquor stores, and adult entertainment establishments. It would also prohibit public assistance benefits from being used to purchase alcohol, tobacco, and lottery tickets.

“Some people truly need the public’s help to buy groceries and clothes, and that’s fine,” said Senator Maziarz. “But when someone is using taxpayer dollars to gamble, drink, and smoke, I think most New Yorkers would agree that’s a clear abuse of the public assistance program.”

“We want to make sure that public assistance is being used to put food on peoples’ tables and support families in their times of need,” Senator Maziarz added. “This is a common sense effort to make sure that taxpayer dollars are being used for their intended purpose.”

Senator Maziarz is one of more than two dozen co-sponsors of the Public Assistance Integrity Act in the State Senate. The measure was previously approved by the Senate in 2012 and 2013, but the Assembly has not acted on the proposal.

Enactment of the Public Assistance Integrity Act would bring New York into compliance with a federal law known as the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012. This law required states to pass abuse prevention measures like the Public Assistance Integrity Act or forfeit some federal temporary assistance aid. If New York does not pass a law this year, it could stand to lose up to \$122 million in federal aid per year.

Governor Cuomo included a measure similar to the Public Assistance Integrity Act in his executive budget proposal released last month.

“The time for action is now,” Senator Maziarz said. “This should be a no-brainer but we have been waiting for two years for the Assembly to pass this bill.”

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