



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael F. Nozzolio

Senator Nozzolio Announces Adoption of Legislation to Prevent Welfare Abuse

MICHAEL F. NOZZOLIO February 5, 2014

Continuing his strong commitment to the people in his Senate District, State Senator Mike Nozzolio announced today that legislation he co-sponsored and fought for, has been adopted in the New York State Senate. Senate bill S.966 prohibits the purchase of alcoholic beverages, tobacco products or lottery tickets with public assistance benefits. Senator Nozzolio fought for over 2 years for the passage of this important legislation. Earlier this year, Senator Nozzolio launched a petition drive on his website that gained over 7,000 signatures of support for this important measure.

“This legislation is necessary to prevent the victimization of children and families. Every dollar spent on wasteful items is money that cannot be spent on essentials like diapers, medicine and housing. Public assistance is a program that was designed to help truly needy individuals to take care of themselves and their families until they can become self sufficient. It was never designed or intended to be used to purchase items such as alcohol, tobacco products, or lottery tickets. We must take decisive action to protect children and families by putting an end to this wasteful abuse of public assistance benefits. By making these purchases illegal, we will be able to send money back to our taxpayers and free up funding for job fairs, training programs and job search workshops. Individuals still wishing to sign my petition can do so by going to my website at www.senatornozzolio.com and signing my petition to end welfare abuse,” said Senator Mike Nozzolio.

Additionally, this measure would also prevent individuals from using an EBTcard to make ATM withdrawals from certain places, including liquor stores, casinos and adult entertainment clubs.

EBT cards work like a debit card for those who receive welfare benefits. The EBT card contains both food Stamps and cash assistance. Food Stamps have strict regulations on what can be purchased -- Cash Assistance does not. Cash Assistance is supposed to be used for items that cannot be purchased using food stamps, such as laundry soap, toothpaste, diapers and toiletries, such as toilet paper. Right now, it is perfectly legal for a welfare recipient to use their cash assistance to buy cigarettes, beer, lottery tickets, or to spend their benefit check on an afternoon at the racetrack or an evening at an adult entertainment club.

Currently, there are no laws or regulations that restrict or prohibit the use of welfare benefits for alcohol, tobacco, lottery tickets or gambling.

"This is an outrage and a flagrant misuse of taxpayer dollars. The hardworking taxpayers across New York State deserve better. It is absolutely critical that we reform the public assistance system to stop individuals who take advantage of these programs and that we take the appropriate steps to make sure that these benefit programs are used to help only those people who are truly in need. When it comes to government no one person has all the answers. We need to take the best ideas from both sides to prevent waste and reduce the burden on our hardworking taxpayers. By working together we can give everyone the opportunity to succeed. It is now up to the New York State Assembly to act without delay to enact this important measure," said Senator Mike Nozzolio.

Please click [HERE](#) to view a video of Senator Nozzolio's recent comments on this legislation.

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