



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Join the Fight Against Welfare Abuse

PATTY RITCHIE March 3, 2014

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Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

It's frustrating to know that someone would abuse a program designed to help children and families in need and let people get back on their feet. That's why reports that some people are using their taxpayer-paid welfare benefits to pay for tobacco, alcohol—even trips to nightclubs—really touch a nerve.

I believe that welfare benefits should be used to help those who need it—not fund unsavory habits. That's why I'm a cosponsor of the "Public Assistance Integrity Act," a measure that would prohibit the use of welfare benefits to buy alcohol, tobacco or lottery tickets and bars the use of EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer) cards in liquor stores, casinos and adult entertainment businesses.

The Public Assistance Integrity Act has passed the State Senate three times and more than a dozen states have already passed similar measures. But, so far, the Assembly has failed to act on this important piece of legislation. If you believe in stopping welfare abuse, I encourage you to sign my petition, which is [available here](#). So far, more than 1,000 have signed on to show their support and to encourage the Assembly to pass this common-sense reform.

My job as State Senator is to listen to you and on my website, you'll also find other ways to weigh in on current issues and make your opinion heard. Currently, I'm asking for your input on the [Governor's proposal to offer college courses to prison inmates](#), as well as my legislation which would support sportsmen by [allowing UTVs to be legally registered in New York State](#).

As the current legislative session continues, lawmakers will be voting on changes that affect you. If there's an issue that is of particular importance to you, I encourage you to weigh in using my online

petitions or to contact me directly and let your voice be heard.