



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## Addabbo Supports Legislation to Mandate That Lottery Funds Be Used Only for Education in New York State

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR June 2, 2015

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Queens, NY (June 1, 2015): NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. recently joined with his Senate colleagues in passing legislation (S.165) that would make it absolutely clear that funds raised through the New York State Lottery can only be used to support education and not be diverted to other purposes.

“The New York State Lottery provides billions of dollars for school aid every year for New York’s 700 school districts, and has contributed more than \$51.6 billion to our educational system since it was launched 48 years ago,” said Addabbo, a member of the Senate Education Committee. “However, many of my constituents are still concerned that lottery dollars may wrongly be diverted to other purposes other than education. This legislation makes it absolutely clear that these dollars can only be used to benefit our students and our schools and that they cannot be comingled with other state funds.”

Addabbo noted that it has not been uncommon over the years for certain “dedicated funds” to be raided to pay for altogether different programs when the economy takes a downturn or new initiatives are in need of support. As an example, he pointed to the state’s Environmental Protection Fund, which has been robbed of approximately \$500 million since

its inception, with the diverted funds being spent for non-environmental purposes.

“According to figures from the NYS Division of the Lottery, \$3.17 billion was provided to the State’s school districts in the 2013-2014 fiscal year, with more than \$1 billion of that total coming to New York City,” Addabbo said, noting that City schools have received \$19.7 billion from the lottery since 1977. Lottery revenues generally make up roughly 15 percent of the annual school aid package statewide. During the 2013-2014 fiscal year, \$2.26 billion in traditional lottery revenues went to schools, along with \$916 million from video gaming – such as that practiced by the Resorts World Racino at Aqueduct Racetrack in Queens.

Addabbo noted that lottery aid and its distribution are a common source of confusion for many New York residents. This is because lottery dollars are not a supplement to state education aid, but part of the entire funding package. “If we didn’t have money from lottery sales, we would need to raise taxes, cut important state services or otherwise find ways to replace the lottery funds that go to New York’s schools,” he said. “Given that New York State has not yet lived up to its commitment to New York City’s school children under the Campaign for Fiscal Equity court decision, we have to make sure that not one penny of lottery funding goes astray. The legislation approved by the Senate would help to bolster that commitment.”

Having passed the Senate, the Assembly counterpart legislation is now under consideration by the Assembly Education Committee.

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