



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## Addabbo participates in Senate Racing, Gaming and Wagering Committee public hearing on sports betting in New York State

SENATOR JOSEPH P. ADDABBO, JR. February 5, 2018

| ISSUE: **SPORTS BETTING, GAMING AND WAGERING, TO DISCUSS THE POTENTIAL OF SPORTS BETTING IN NEW YORK STATE, ADDABBO**



NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. recently joined his colleagues on the Senate Racing, Gaming, and Wagering Committee in holding a public hearing to gather input on whether sports betting should be legalized in New York State if a federal ban on the practice is ultimately lifted or limited by the United States Supreme Court.

“At the hearing, we heard from a variety of witnesses discussing both the pros and cons of legalized sports betting in New York,” said Addabbo, the ranking member of the Racing Committee. “Groups including the NBA, OTB, national sports betting organizations, horse breeders, and the New York Council on Problem Gambling were represented, along with leaders of the State Gaming Commission and the New York Racing Association.”

Addabbo explained that sports betting became illegal in the United States in 1993 under federal law, with the exception of four states where the practice was permitted to continue in a legal framework. New York was not one of those states, but the Upstate Gaming Economic Development Act of 2013, which allowed for casino development in the state following approval of a public referendum, contains a provision that would provide for legal sports wagering at casinos if it is legalized at the federal level.

“A major point voiced by many of the witnesses favoring sports betting in New York is that legalizing the practice would take it out of the black market, provide for its regulation, ensure consumer protections, help our economy, and provide a new source of revenue for important public purposes,” said Addabbo. “The American Gaming Association estimates that Americans bet \$154 billion on sports in 2016, mostly through illegal bookies and off-shore websites. Broken down by population, that would mean New Yorkers wagered close to \$9.4 billion during that time period.”

Right now, the fate of sports betting is in the hands of the United States Supreme Court, which recently heard oral arguments in **Christie v. NCAA**, a lawsuit challenging New Jersey’s efforts to implement sports betting. The state has made several different attempts to legalize sports wagering over the years despite the provisions of the federal Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act prohibiting the practice. A decision is expected this spring.

“It was educational to listen to those who spoke on various aspects of legalized sports betting, including whether it might ultimately be permitted at racetracks as well as casinos,” said Addabbo. “Witnesses also spoke to whether sports leagues should receive a portion of the total amounts wagered, and whether legalized sports betting would add to an already serious problem of compulsive gambling in New York State. It is a complex issue, and I am sure there will be greater discussions in New York depending on the U.S. Supreme Court decision in the New Jersey case.” The Senator stated that while working on the matter of sports betting, he would focus on the issues of consumer protection and preserving the integrity of professional sports.

As additional debate on sports betting goes forward, Addabbo said he would especially consider the impact of its possible legalization on the Resorts World Casino New York City and Aqueduct Raceway, both of which are contained in his Senate district.

“There are clearly benefits and drawbacks to legalized sports betting, but I think it is important to instill some form of rational and effective regulation on the practice, so that individuals can witness new job opportunities, our state can realize additional revenues,” he said. “I look forward to hearing from my constituents and other interested parties on this complicated issue.”