



Commissioner Bridget Gainer
Cook County Board of Commissioners
10th District
Cook County
Chicago, Illinois 60602

COOK COUNTY COMMISSIONER BRIDGET GAINER AND DUPAGE BOARD MEMBER SHEAHAN CALL FOR VIDEO POKER BAN IN THEIR COUNTIES
Bipartisan effort to protect taxpayers from massive gambling expansion

CHICAGO (July 21, 2009)— Cook County Commissioner Bridget Gainer (D-10th District) and DuPage County Board Member Brien Sheahan (R-2nd District) will soon introduce ordinances to their county boards banning video poker after Gov. Quinn signed into law a massive new video poker expansion that is the equivalent of nearly 50 new casinos spread throughout Illinois communities.

Today's 12,000 licensed gaming positions at 10 Illinois riverboats would be increased to nearly 60,000 gaming slots with the addition of more than 45,000 new video poker machines scattered in taverns, meeting halls and restaurants in virtually every community across the state. The measure was part of the funding source for the capital bill signed into law by Gov. Quinn last week.

The Illinois General Assembly passed the video poker expansion to help fund the bonds for the much needed capital program. But since the expansion was passed in a late-night legislative session, with no public hearings or debate, Gainer, Sheahan, civic groups and Democrat state lawmakers announced their opposition to the measure.

The government reform group the Civic Federation; the watchdog Better Government Association; The Cook County Board Women's Caucus of Commissioners Gainer, Earlean Collins, Joan Patricia Murphy, Deborah Sims, and Elizabeth Doody Gorman; and state legislators State Sen. Rev. James Meeks (D-Chicago), State Rep. Jack Franks (D-Chicago), all oppose video poker as a funding source for a capital bill.

“There is great need for a capital bill in Illinois to rebuild our roads, bridges, schools and transit systems, but at what cost?” said Commissioner Gainer. “The jobs we create with the capital bill could be negated by the paychecks wiped out by video poker and by the increased law enforcement and court costs of dealing with its fallout.”

Sheahan, of the DuPage County Board, representing the Elmhurst area, said there was no transparency or opportunity for the public to be informed.



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“The Governor and the Illinois General Assembly never gave the people of Illinois the opportunity to hear about the costs and benefits of this massive gambling expansion which is like putting a mini-casino on every corner of every community,” said Sheahan.

“So we are going to act to ban this activity in the unincorporated areas where our respective county boards can act and we urge the municipalities of the Chicagoland area to follow suit. This will have a huge impact on the quality of life of our communities.”

In addition to the Cook County and DuPage ordinances, the Better Government Association has announced that it will hold hearings on the video poker expansion.

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