



Delaware House of Representatives House Majority Caucus

**For Immediate Release:
March 29, 2010**

**Contact: Drew Volturo
Work: (302) 744-4001
Cell: (302) 593-5969**

AMENDMENT WOULD ALLOW TWO ADDITIONAL CASINO VENUES IN DELAWARE

Rep. Schwartzkopf amending his House Bill 194 in advance of Thursday's debate

DOVER – With a floor debate on gaming expansion legislation scheduled for Thursday, House Majority Leader Rep. Peter C. Schwartzkopf filed an amendment on Monday that would allow for two additional casino venues in Delaware and establishes criteria and a transparent process for selecting locations.

The amendment to House Bill 194 would essentially rewrite the existing bill and authorize the addition of a casino in Sussex County and the city of Wilmington. The five-page amendment grew out of a report commissioned by the state earlier this year that determined that two additional venues would increase revenue to the state.

“When I filed House Bill 194 last year, I was dealing strictly with amending harness racing licenses,” said Rep. Schwartzkopf, D-Rehoboth Beach. “The Video and Sports Lottery Study Commission authorized a study that came back in January favorable to two more casinos in Delaware. After listening to people on all sides, I decided that a more competitive, open and transparent process for determining the locations is the best way to proceed.”

Under the measure, two separate five-member committees would be established to determine the feasibility and select casino locations in Sussex County and Wilmington. The Sussex panel would consist of the director of the Delaware Economic Development Office, the secretary of finance, and a retired judicial officer of the Delaware courts, a retired banker with at least 12 years of experience and a retired law enforcement officer, all appointed by the governor. The Wilmington committee would consist of two appointments by the mayor of Wilmington, one member chosen by the Wilmington City Council president, the secretary of finance and the director of DEDO, who shall be designated as chair.

Applications must be submitted within 60 to 75 days of enactment of the legislation. The committees would review each application and judge them based on multiple criteria, including at a minimum:

- Overall anticipated revenue of the Delaware Lottery at each location;
- Capacity of the project to create the maximum number of permanent and temporary jobs;
- Business plan for the project and the experience of the owners, developers and video lottery operators;
- Financial viability of the project and the financial investment made to date;
- How soon a project could be open for business;
- Effects on the surrounding community.

“We want to make sure that applicants are capable of following through on their proposals and that they build what they say they are going to build,” Rep. Schwartzkopf said.

Rep. Schwartzkopf noted that the amendment also allows for the consideration of a licensing fee for each new venue, but that would need to be enacted separately. Adding a fee to the bill would increase the margin for passage from a simple majority – 21 votes – to a three-fifths majority – 25 votes.

In addition to revisiting the issue of a licensing fee, Rep. Schwartzkopf said the amendment calls for reviewing ways to help offset some of the expenses that the existing casinos have.

“I’m not sure everyone will be happy with the final product, but I think this is a much fairer approach than the original House Bill 194. It incorporates ideas and addresses concerns from several people on all sides of the issue,” Rep. Schwartzkopf said. “I look forward to a lively and spirited debate on Thursday.”

###