



## ***Florida's Gaming Bill is Off and Running!***

**January 9, 2012 (Tallahassee, FL)—Senate Bill 710**, the bill to bring three destination casino resorts to Florida, **passed through the Senate Regulated Industries committee** in Tallahassee on Monday. By a **7-3 vote**, the committee agreed to move the bill to its next committee of reference in the Senate.

Senator Bogdanoff overhauled her bill in a strike-all amendment and the legislation would now **allow existing pari-mutuels to expand their gaming operations to include banked card games and slots**, *provided local voters pass separate referendums allowing slots and the expanded gaming.*

An equally important revision would now include *the regulation rather than ban of internet sweepstakes cafes*. The bill would **grandfather any existing internet cafes but prohibit the expansion of any new such businesses in the future**. It is estimated there are approximately 1000 internet cafes currently operating in Florida.

Sen. Charlie Dean also added an amendment that would **reduce the tax rate on slots for pari-mutuels from 35% to 10% if voters pass a referendum allowing slots**. So far, only Broward and Miami Dade have passed a referendum but other counties are now considering doing it.

As I mentioned in earlier INSIDER UPDATES, there are currently 17 dormant pari-mutuel permits that may be activated at any time given the right circumstances. The new bill language will **revoke those permits and prohibit the issuance of any new pari-mutuel permits in the future**.

What's next?

The bill must still go through the Budget committee and the Senate Rules committee which is chaired by *Senator Thrasher who voted against the bill*. The House has not discussed the bill so far, but a workshop is scheduled to hear the companion bill in the Business and Consumer Affairs committee on Wednesday.

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