

The Connecticut General Assembly



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, March 15, 2018

BRIDGEPORT SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES DELIVER UNIFIED TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF CASINO



The Bridgeport state legislative delegation spoke in a powerful show of unity on March 15 in support of permitting an open, competitive process to expand casino gaming into Bridgeport and bring 7,000 new jobs to the Park City.

State Sens. Marilyn Moore and Ed Gomes, and state Reps. Steve Stafstrom, Ezequiel Santiago, Andre Baker, Charles Stallworth, Christopher Rosario and Jack Hennessy, testified together during a public hearing of the General Assembly's Public Safety and Security Committee in support of [House Bill 5305](#), which would create an open, competitive bidding process for new casino expansion in Connecticut.

"The bottom line is that we who represent Bridgeport want the best deal for our city. We want jobs and economic development, not 10 years from now, but now. Allowing Connecticut to expand gaming could bring thousands of jobs to our city," said **Moore**, D-Bridgeport. "And if we do end up deciding to expand casino operations off tribal land in Connecticut, then the fairest and most transparent way to do that would be through a gaming commission, as is done in other states."

As a member of the committee, state Sen. Ed Gomes is not permitted to testify, but he too spoke in favor of the competitive process and echoed the delegation's testimony.

“It’s Bridgeport’s time,” said **Gomes**, D-Bridgeport, during the meeting. “Our people are suffering and we’re going to fight tooth and nail to bring these jobs to Bridgeport.”

“If Connecticut is going to expand casino gaming, we need to make sure we get the best deal and only an open competition can guarantee that,” said **Stafstrom**, D-Bridgeport. “The prospect of thousands of jobs for our community and tens of millions of dollars in new tax revenue cannot be ignored. I am proud to stand united with my delegation colleagues in support of the prospect of more development and growth for our city and the entire Bridgeport region.”

“Our city’s unemployment rate exceeds the state average, and a tax base in desperate need of sustained growth and I know that attracting new industries is essential,” said **Rosario**, D-Bridgeport. “We need jobs in Connecticut, and our economy needs help and the possibility of a commercial casino, which could help our city, our region and our entire state, merits careful review. We should not settle for anything short of the best deal possible. This is a decision with ramifications for our entire state – that’s why the decision shouldn’t be delegated, or narrowed arbitrarily, or shrouded in mystery and uncertainty. Connecticut residents deserve nothing less.”

“This part of Bridgeport is one of the last undeveloped areas in the East Coast. We have an opportunity to grow and develop that area with the rest of Fairfield County,” said **Baker**, D-Bridgeport. “This project will not only help attract new business ventures to the city and create countless job opportunities for the region, but it stands to become an important cornerstone of our community.”

“Connecticut’s future is dependent upon the vibrancy of its cities. It is vital that we continue to invest in Bridgeport’s development so that the state’s largest city can be the economic engine Connecticut needs to move forward. We are shovel-ready for our future,” said **Hennessy**, D-Bridgeport.

“Jobs—good jobs that pay a living wage—that is what we are talking about here,” said **Stallworth**, D-Bridgeport. “Residents of Bridgeport have been waiting for opportunity to knock. Well, opportunity is here and we will not let the state lock the door and walk away.”

“It seems that Bridgeport is often an after-thought when it comes to legislative decisions that have the potential to have a major impact on jobs, business and the local economy,” said **Santiago**, D-Bridgeport. “There should be no argument that Bridgeport is the most ideal location for this type of development and we, as a delegation, are united in putting our city first.”

###