

To the Honorable Members of the Illinois Senate
97th General Assembly:

In accordance with Article IV, Section 9(b), of the Illinois Constitution, I hereby veto Senate Bill 744 from the 97th General Assembly.

This is a bad bill for the people of Illinois. As I made clear when I vetoed Senate Bill 1849 last summer, I will not approve of any gaming expansion without strong ethical standards, comprehensive oversight and dedicated resources for education.

Unfortunately, Senate Bill 744 is even more significantly flawed than Senate Bill 1849. Senate Bill 744's most glaring deficiency is the total absence of comprehensive ethical standards and regulatory oversight. This bill also lacks a ban on campaign contributions by gaming licensees and casino managers, which is essential to keeping corruption out of the gaming industry.

Senate Bill 744's shortcomings also include the lack of regulatory oversight over the Chicago Casino by the Illinois Gaming Board, the absence of any procurement guidelines or restrictions in connection with Chicago's Casino contracts, and its inadequate support for education. Our economic future depends on the education of our children. Any gaming legislation must prioritize our students and teachers.

In addition, this bill allows for an excessive expansion that is simply too much, including a casino at the fairgrounds where families bring their children.

As I did when I vetoed Senate Bill 1849, I call on the members of the General Assembly to work with me, my staff, the Illinois Gaming Board, the Illinois Racing Board, the City of Chicago, and all other interested parties to ensure that the final version of any gaming legislation includes strong ethical standards, clear regulatory oversight, and adequate support for our students and teachers.

Lastly, we cannot gamble our way out of our pension challenge. Any gaming revenue is a drop in the bucket compared to the \$96 billion unfunded pension liability that Illinois faces. I urge lawmakers to prioritize public pension reform, the most urgent issue facing our state. The people of Illinois deserve no less.

Accordingly, I must return this bill without my approval. Therefore, pursuant to Article IV, Section 9(b) of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, I hereby return Senate Bill 744, entitled “AN ACT concerning gaming.”, with the foregoing objections, vetoed in its entirety.

Sincerely,

PAT QUINN
Governor