

Del. House Rejects Sports Betting Bill

Posted: May 5, 2009 08:39 PM EDT

Updated: May 6, 2009 10:04 AM EDT



(Photo: MGN)

DOVER, Del. (AP/WBOC)- A bill re-establishing a sports betting lottery in Delaware has failed to clear the state House.

The legislation proposed by Gov. Jack Markell received a favorable vote of 23-15 Tuesday night but fell two votes short of the required three-fifths majority.

Representatives of the state's three slot machine casinos, which have a state-granted monopoly on gambling in Delaware, have pushed for sports betting for years.

But they lobbied heavily against Markell's proposal because it calls for the state to take a larger share of casino revenue.

The bill would have legalized sports gaming and increased taxes on casinos. Republican lawmakers sided with the casinos who say more taxes could drive them out of business.

The bill's sponsor, Rep. Pete Schwartzkopf says the state will now need to find another \$55 million to trim from the budget. And with state workers being asked to take an eight percent pay cut, more cuts could be painful.

Supporters of the bill have argued casinos have a monopoly on their business and they should share in the burden of cutting the budget.

The debate at Legislative Hall on Tuesday was heated. Lawmakers have two months to decide on budget cuts.