

Written by Administrator
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The Assembly is poised today to enact Senate-approved legislation to create a state-operated casino and entertainment district, along with eased regulations, for the Atlantic City palaces.

They are what Gov. Christie proposed July 21 to make New Jersey a "partner in success" with the boardwalk empire

bedeviled by revenue-draining competition in surrounding states.

On Dec. 21, the Senate accepted the governor's recommendations, approving the bill that would establish the state-run, and expanded, Atlantic City tourism districts. Various functions would be shifted to the Casino Reinvestment and Development Authority.

Companion legislation to ease casino regulations that became operational in 1978 also passed Dec. 21. Christie said it would save the casinos up to \$60 million for reinvestment.

The legislation is intended to make the tourism district safer, cleaner and attract families. The hotel luxury tax would be eliminated.

Atlantic City's 11 casinos create major economic impact. They employ 38,000, pay nearly \$1.7 million in annual salaries, spend nearly \$2 billion for goods and services, and contribute more than \$900 million in state and local taxes primarily to benefit senior citizens and the disabled -- including Hudson County.

"Atlantic City is in a tailspin," commented Sen. James Whelan, Atlantic City Democrat, sponsor of the revitalization bill.

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