

Wait before making ex-lawmaker a regulator - Citizens Voice

Written by Administrator
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The appointment last week of recently retired former state House Speaker Keith McCall to the state gaming control board highlighted the need for a rule barring lawmakers from service on the board until they are out of office for a much longer period.

Under the 2004 law that created the casino gambling industry in Pennsylvania, the regulatory board comprises

seven voting members. Three are appointed by the governor. The four leaders of the House and Senate Democratic and Republican caucuses appoint one member each. They are not confirmed by the Senate. Board members are paid \$145,000 a year.

McCall was appointed by state Rep. Frank Dermody, the House Democratic leader.

A spokesman for the Democratic caucus said that a former legislator inherently has knowledge about the gambling law and that there is no reason to delay gambling board membership.

But there is a very good reason - transparency. It's always disconcerting when a lawmaker leaves the Legislature for an enterprise about which he had helped to craft laws.

Former U.S. Rep. Billy Tauzin of Louisiana was a principal architect of the Medicare Part D drug law, for example, and left Congress to become chief lobbyist for the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America.

The cases are somewhat different because McCall will be a regulator rather than an industry lobbyist. Yet when any representative leaves any legislature and vaults immediately into an enterprise dealing with sensitive public policy, it raises the question of whether the lawmaker had legislated for the public good, the industry's good or his own good.

The Legislature should eliminate the question by requiring a two-year waiting period for any former lawmaker to be appointed a regulator of industries governed by laws he helped to write.

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