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BOSTON - Gov. [Deval L. Patrick](#) promised Thursday that if he revisits plans to bring [casinos](#) and slot facilities

to Massachusetts, he will refrain from consulting his former chief of staff, Doug Rubin, who was hired this week to lobby for a prominent gambling firm.

“He and I aren’t going to be talking about casinos, no matter how close we are,” Patrick said during an interview on Boston area radio station WTKK-FM Thursday morning. “I think the world of Doug. He is a person of, I think, consistently high integrity. He is very careful in abiding by both the spirit and letter of the law.

“But I also am sensitive to the appearances issue. If we go back to this issue ... as the speaker says he wants to, I can tell you Doug and I aren’t going to have any conversations,” he said.

Rubin announced last week that he and former Patrick communications director Kyle Sullivan planned to launch a consulting firm, Northwind Strategies, to provide “full service strategic communications and public relations consulting, marketing and public affairs services for corporations, nonprofits, and grassroots campaigns and initiatives.”

According to state lobbying records, Rubin, a registered lobbyist, has been hired by GTECH Corporation, a prominent gambling technology and services company that has bid in the past on state Lottery business, as Patrick and legislative leaders consider a renewed push for expanded gambling in Massachusetts.

“Northwind Strategies will not do any lobbying in the upcoming casino debate, period,” Sullivan said in a prepared statement.

An ethics, lobbying and campaign finance law enacted in 2009 prohibits former state

employees from lobbying lawmakers or executive branch officials for a year, providing for a so-called cooling-off period.

Rubin left the administration to join Patrick's campaign in July 2009, but Sullivan only recently quit in January.

Although House and Senate leaders largely agreed last year to support three resort-style casinos, Patrick rejected a House-backed proposal to direct two slot parlor licenses to state racetracks, calling them "no-bid contracts" for wealthy track owners. Speaker Robert A. DeLeo, who has championed racetrack slots, has insisted that they're the only way to generate new revenue quickly.

But during his radio appearance, Patrick suggested that even racetrack slots wouldn't provide a near-term jolt of revenue.

"We still have to get the regulatory and oversight apparatus in place. We're not going to just open the floodgates and let this happen," Patrick said. "There are consequences that come with an expansion of gaming. There are human consequences and community consequences."

Patrick, DeLeo and Senate President Therese Murray say they haven't spoken substantively about gambling, and Patrick said on the radio that he and legislative leaders have "all said privately what we've said publicly" - that if gambling talks are to begin again, they should meet privately and iron out major differences to prevent the issue from dominating the agenda.

"Gaming has not been central to our job growth strategy," he said.

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