

Written by Administrator
Sunday, 28 May 2017 19:09 -

Doug Finke State Capitol Bureau @DougFinkeSJR

Chances of a Springfield casino took a major hit Sunday when a House committee blocked an amendment to add the casino to an omnibus gambling expansion bill.

Rep. Tim Butler, R-Springfield, had filed an amendment to Senate Bill 7 to add a Springfield casino to the five others authorized by the bill.

However, the House Rules Committee on Sunday did not clear the amendment to be heard in the House Executive Committee on Monday when the expansion bill is scheduled for a hearing.

“If the amendment is stuck in Rules, that means it’s not eligible to be heard (Monday) on the bill,” Butler said.

Butler acknowledged that it makes it unlikely a Springfield casino will be approved during the spring session. The session is scheduled for adjournment Wednesday. Bills approved after that date need a three-fifths vote in each chamber to pass.

“That’s going to be tough,” Butler said of trying to round up additional votes for a gambling proposal.

Sen. Terry Link, D-Waukegan, had said he didn’t want to see changes made to the gambling expansion bill that passed the Senate two weeks ago. He said he is willing to sponsor a separate bill to address a Springfield casino and other changes sought by gambling proponents. However, he also said last week he wants to see what happens to the expansion bill in the House before proceeding with a separate bill.

Butler said it was a long shot for a Springfield casino to be added to the bill.

“I think it’s something I’d like to see considered, but obviously this was something that came up

Written by Administrator
Sunday, 28 May 2017 19:09 -

pretty late in the game,” Butler said. “Sometimes things do get added at the end, but I think when we’ve talked about casinos around the state for many years, this one was really late in the game.”

The gambling expansion bill calls for new casinos in Chicago, Rockford, Danville, Lake County and the south Chicago suburbs. Proponents have argued casinos in those locations will draw gamblers who now go to Wisconsin and Indiana and keep their money in Illinois.

Lobbyist and local developer Chris Stone came up with the idea of a casino for Springfield which he said could provide as much as \$25 million a year for schools and city government and to make repairs and upgrades to the state fairgrounds and Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

He also estimated the casino would add 600 to 800 jobs in downtown Springfield.

-- Contact Doug Finke: doug.finke@sj-r.com, 788-1527, twitter.com/dougfinkesjr.

Read more <http://news.google.com/news/url?sa=t&fd=R&ct2=us&usg=AFQjCN GGGN9ISdcBaR1wOAAFxWj47SpDCg&clid=c3a7d30bb8a4878e06b80cf16b898331∓ei=w5wrWeiGKoGihgGW6lnABA&url=http://www.sj-r.com/news/20170528/odds-against-springfield-casino-after-amendment-blocked>