

Upstate NY casino workers plan more rallies to protest continued shutdown

Written by Administrator

Wednesday, 26 August 2020 15:20 -

Tyre, N.Y. — A week after [staging a rally in Albany](#), and hearing no response, workers at Upstate New York's shuttered private casinos are taking their message on the road.

They want the state to allow commercial gaming facilities to reopen (as Upstate's Indian nation-operated casinos already have.)

Employees plan rallies Thursday at five or six of the gaming facilities that have been shut down since March due to the [coronavirus](#). While most of the state's Indian nation casinos have been open for months, the non-Indian (or commercial) casinos have not been cleared by Gov. Andrew Cuomo to resume business.

Meanwhile, other long-shut businesses have been allowed to open recently, including bowling alleys and gyms. Cuomo has said the decisions on business category openings depend on how essential they are versus their risk of spreading the virus.

Since last week's rally outside the State Capitol in Albany, Cuomo has said nothing about reopening the commercial casinos.

"Not a word," said Valerie McIntyre of Liverpool, a table games supervisor at [del Lago Resort & Casino](#) near Waterloo. "How sad is that?"

McIntyre is one of the workers organizing the rallies. They are planned for noon Thursday at del Lago, Rivers Casino Resort in Schenectady, Resorts World Catskills near Monticello in Sullivan County, Tioga Downs west of Binghamton and Vernon Downs in Oneida County. There may also be a rally at Finger Lakes Gaming and Racetrack near Canandaigua, she said.

McIntyre, like other casino workers, is worried about losing her job.

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In mid-July, Upstate's four full-service commercial casinos and two related racinos (race tracks with slots) [warned they would lay off 5,000 employees](#) who have been furloughed since March if they are not allowed to reopen by the end of September. That's because the 6-month furlough window expires then.

The rallies are generated by the workers themselves, not the casino management or owners. They are also not sponsored by any unions.

"This is about us personally as workers," McIntyre said. "We want to get back to work."

McIntyre noted that players who might go to the commercial casinos are heading to the Indian casinos, which have not reported coronavirus outbreaks. Although the Indian casinos are not strictly bound by the governor's re-opening orders, they are following safety protocols that mirror those required by the state.

The open Indian casinos include four run by the Oneida Nation: Turning Stone in Verona, Yellow Brick Road in Chittenango, Point Place in Bridgeport and the [new Lake House slot machine facility and restaurant](#) in Sylvan Beach. Others are operated by the Cayuga, Seneca and Akwesasne Mohawk nations.

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[Upstate NY's shuttered non-Indian casinos warn of massive layoffs](#)

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[Upstate New York's Indian casinos are reopening. When will non-tribal gaming follow?](#)

[‘Ready to play.’ Oneidas reopen Turning Stone, other casinos](#)

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