

## **Failing to Consider Non-Tax PA Revenues Hurts Families and Businesses**

*By State Representative Mark Mustio, 44th Legislative District*

Right now Governor Tom Wolf and legislators are desperately scrambling to find substantial, recurring revenue to close out the 2017-2018 state budget. If you've been paying attention, you know that this is no easy feat. Right now, the budget is set at \$32 billion and they need at least \$700 million more to make ends meet.

Amidst trying to fill a huge void in revenue, our Governor and some in the General Assembly have blatantly overlooked arguably the most common sense option for such revenue, to the tune of an estimated \$300 to \$400 million annually for Pennsylvania. I'm talking about the legalization of Video Gaming Terminals (VGTs) in liquor licensed locations.

Let me make this clear. We are not, as the big casinos claim, talking about placing "mini casinos" on every corner. Our proposal would give our local businesses and fraternal organizations the chance to place five or fewer VGTs in their location to attract patrons and gain a new stream of revenue at a time when it is desperately needed – for their business as well as the Commonwealth.

What's most important to keep in mind is that thousands of illegal VGTs are here in Pennsylvania, right now. They are being operated out of locations with no regulation, no oversight and no money back to local and state governments. It is morally and fiscally irresponsible for our legislators to not, at the very least, regulate this existing industry. When you consider that regulation would deliver local share back to all 67 counties plus provide substantial funds dedicated to help problem gaming, you must really begin to wonder the political motives at play here.

Why would our Governor and some legislators coldly turn their backs on the hardworking small business owners who have elected them into office? Consider the million-dollar ad campaigns being run by Las Vegas casinos. Casinos don't want to share an inch of the playing field with small businesses and are in fact lobbying hard to silence them completely.

Don't let them silence you!

Every single liquor licensed location in Pennsylvania should make their voice heard. Every hard-working taxpayer should make their voice heard. Pick up the phone today. Call your legislators and the Governor and tell them to stop choosing casinos over local businesses. Tell them to regain common sense and prioritize the needs of Pennsylvania – *not Las Vegas!*