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**Casino bill 'excessive': Quinn; 'My job is to make sure the people . . . come first, not the gamblers, not the insiders'**

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SPRINGFIELD - [Gov. Quinn](http://www.nexis.com/search/XMLCrossLinkSearch.do?bct=A&risb=21_T21308977520&returnToId=20_T21309131411&csi=11064&A=0.2500293837308971&sourceCSI=162599&indexTerm=%23PE000A4UW%23&searchTerm=Gov.%20Quinn%20&indexType=P) signaled potentially serious trouble for a Chicago casino Wednesday.

While he stopped short of saying he would outright veto the legislation authorizing the gambling venue, he told reporters the bill was "excessive."

While embracing the concept of a city casino on its own, that is not what lawmakers handed him. Instead, the deal the state Senate approved Tuesday was far more expansive, providing for four other casinos in the suburbs and Downstate and permitting slot machines at racetracks and, possibly, the city's two airports.

"I have told the legislators over and over again the people of Illinois do not want an excessive gambling bill that's top-heavy, and I think I reflect the public sentiment on that," Quinn said.

"In Chicago, I have said I can see if it's properly done, an opportunity for a gambling casino. But once the General Assembly got this subject, both House and Senate, it got more and more top-heavy. Well my job is to make sure the people of Illinois come first, not the gamblers, not the insiders," the governor told reporters in his Statehouse office.

Quinn repeatedly refused to say whether he would veto the package, pledging only his intent to do a "microscopic review" of the first significant gambling expansion package in Illinois in more than 20 years.

If Quinn killed the city casino or sent the legislation back to the General Assembly with changes, he would be imperiling one of Mayor [Rahm Emanuel's](http://www.nexis.com/search/XMLCrossLinkSearch.do?bct=A&risb=21_T21308977520&returnToId=20_T21309131411&csi=11064&A=0.2500293837308971&sourceCSI=162599&indexTerm=%23PE0009WLH%23&searchTerm=Rahm%20Emanuel's%20&indexType=P) top priorities. There were not enough votes in the House and Senate to support an override of any possible Quinn veto or amendatory veto.

During the last two weeks, Emanuel met with Quinn to discuss his desire for a city casino, and since Friday, the mayor has called wavering city lawmakers to help get the package over the legislative hump.

Quinn made clear he is not concerned about harming his relationship with the new mayor if he takes action that winds up scuttling the city casino because it was embedded with too many other gambling pieces that he opposes.

"I'm beholden to the people of Illinois, not to legislators, not to mayors. The people of our state, all 13 million good and true, they're the ones who I get up in the morning every day and say, 'What's best for them?' " Quinn said.

On other issues, Quinn repeated his vow to veto legislation that would allow ComEd to raise rates to invest in its power grid - coming down on the side of consumers rather than lobbyists in "three-piece suits and fancy shoes." He also expressed disappointment about the fiscal 2012 budget lawmakers approved.

The governor characterized the budget, which is about $2 billion less than what he proposed in February, as "incomplete" but declined to say whether he would veto it or order legislators back to Springfield to address the matter.

"I don't think anyone who looks at it would say they would be happy with the investment in education. I mention early childhood, scholarships for students who are needy who have the ability to do college work, very disappointed in the fact that they cut funding for kindergarten through 12th grade in our grammar schools and our high schools. That's no way to build a better Illinois," he said.

"And I will tell legislators of both parties and both houses how I feel about education and how I think the public feels. They didn't get the job done properly there. It's incomplete, and I think we need to keep working with them," Quinn said.

At a news conferences in Chicago, Emanuel said he's "proud of the partnership" he forged with Quinn to deliver education and immigration reform and hopes he will decide the casino issue in Chicago's favor.

Emanuel inherited an annual structural deficit approaching $1.2 billion when unfunded pension liabilities are factored in. He desperately needs casino revenues he has pegged at $20 million a month for infrastructure and education projects.

"I hope the governor sees this as an opportunity. I understand that he's evaluating it. In my conversations with him, he sees the strengths," Emanuel said. "My hope is that the governor, when he weighs the equities here, will see the benefit economically, both in job creation as well as revenue we can then use to make further investments in the city's physical infrastructure and in schools."

But he also emphasized that the jackpot of casino revenues was "not a panacea" for Chicago.

"This does not absolve us of our responsibilities to make tough decisions as it relates to the budget. . . . It does not take away the responsibility we have to make the tough decisions we've avoided as a city in making as it relates to our fiscal house," he said.

For the second straight day, Emanuel refused to entertain questions about temporary or permanent casino sites. Nor would he reveal whether he plans to put all 4,000 gaming positions at a downtown casino or divide them between downtown, O'Hare and Midway Airports.

He said: "We'll make sure that it's done above board so people know that and have the confidence. I don't want those to be the questions."

He added, "The governor has yet to sign it. Some people are already getting into location and management. . . . I try not to ever get ahead of myself. Think a little ahead, but never get ahead of myself.

"I want to get this signed into law, then we're gonna get a blue-ribbon group to think through where, what makes the most sense," Emanuel said. "This has been 20 years in the working. I'm glad we've accomplished it. But, we're not done yet. But, at the appropriate time, we'll deal with those questions."