

Today Assembly Member Reginald Byron Jones-Sawyer Sr. announced he will author a new bill to legalize internet poker (iPoker) in California at the beginning of the 2015-16 legislative session. "One of the major reasons that I did not move AB 2291 this legislative session was that the Department of Justice and the California Gaming Commission did not have enough time to review the language and make relevant recommendations on the regulatory structure of the bill. It is essential that Californians have safe and compliant internet poker access. Mr. Jones-Sawyer also stated "we just didn't have enough time to craft and move legislation this year that met those goals. It is also my hope that during the next few months we can continue the dialogue with all the interested principals so that there is a clear consensus and mutual agreement as to who will be able to participate in providing internet poker to our citizens.

Over the past seven months, we have seen tremendous progress regarding this issue. The California Native American Tribes, who have gaming compacts and who presented the language for AB 2291, are more united than ever before. Card Clubs in California, as well as the Horse Racing Industry, have sat down and expressed their interest in providing internet poker access. We have also heard from organizations that are opposed to internet gaming, including iPoker. And finally, we must make sure that any "Bad Actor Language" is written so that it is applied fairly, and avoids any possible future legal challenges."

Internet poker was first discussed over five years ago in the State Legislature, but there has never been a vote in any committee on any bill. Both Senator Rod Wright and Senator Lou Correa have previously authored bills over the past several years. "Each Senator was extremely diligent in moving this issue forward over the past few years. I have had a number of conversations with both of them and have learned a great deal from their hard work. We have come a long way, but we have to be patient, so we can get this right. Setting a standard in California that will be an example for the entire nation is my ultimate goal."