

CHICAGO (CBS) — In a historic vote, Illinois state lawmakers bet on casinos and sports wagering. The House approved the first step toward a casino in Chicago and much more.

The money from it is earmarked to fund badly needed building improvements to state buildings.

The effort to make this a reality was taxing to lawmakers, especially to those opposed.

The Illinois House approved an expansion of legalized gambling 87-27. This adds new wagering opportunities, including casinos in Chicago, its northern and southern suburbs, a handful of other locations and legalizing betting on sporting events for the first time.

One lawmaker described it as a long journey for the state ending Saturday.

Former Governor Pat Quinn and administrations before and after have debated more gambling options and considered casinos in places like Ford Heights.

“You can’t have excessive wide open gambling in Illinois. It’s not good for our state,” Quinn said. “You can’t gamble your way to prosperity.”

Decades of studies and promises of hundreds of millions in revenue haven’t given lawmakers the right hand to pass a bill until now or rather until recent state building concerns.

Revenue from gambling could generate as much as \$700 million in the first year. That would be earmarked for things like construction and building repairs.

Thousands of gambling positions could be added to existing casinos and horse racing tracks.

Illinois Lawmakers Approve First Step Toward Casino In Chicago – CBS Chicago

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The Senate is expected to reconvene Sunday.

Read more <https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2019/06/01/illinois-lawmakers-approve-first-step-toward-casino-in-chicago/>