

Ontarians are very worried about the Liberal government's direction on gaming in the province.

Vocal casino opponents in Toronto, Hamilton, Kingston, and elsewhere are seeing their voices drowned out by wealthy corporate casino lobbyists.

Families and businesses involved in horseracing are witnessing their once-thriving industry gutted to make way for private casinos, with no thought being given to the thousands of Ontarians who depend on horseracing for their livelihoods.

Ontarians are also worried about what they're seeing from the Tories. Mr. Hudak has to be clear what side of his mouth he's talking out of. In one breath he says he wants to stop the government from ramming casinos into communities that don't want them. On the other, he's promising to privatize all gambling and let the Donald Trumps of the world decide where to build.

Casinos aren't a magic pill for a province's financial problems. Affected communities should be given the chance to weigh the costs and benefits before any decision is made.

It's a big decision for any community

And last year the Liberal government and the OLG decided that decision should be made by well-connected insiders working the backrooms...

... and not the people who will be stuck with the consequences.

That's not right.

I'll be asking MPPs to support a different plan.

The NDP motion will give people the opportunity to vote on a referendum whether they want casinos in their communities or not.

The motion will also ensure that a panel is set up so that spending limits for the referendum don't give an unfair advantage to the Donald Trump, cash-rich casino companies.

The motion would also require the government to maintain the Slots at Racetracks Program until a viable plan for the future of Ontario horseracing can be implemented.

It will also ensure that the horse racing industry is able to come up with a viable path forward before the SARP partnership is completely pulled from under their feet leaving the industry to face tens of thousands of job losses and eventual extinction.

The push for OLG privatization is the reason why the SARP partnership was cancelled and what the motion will request is that before the government makes any decision it should ensure that the industry should get its fair share of revenue and that the government and industry need to come up with a real plan forward.

The transitional report demonstrated what the NDP has said for almost a year now, that the Liberal decision to cancel the SARP partnership without a plan will spell the extinction of the horse racing industry and that we can work to find a better solution by consulting with the industry.

New Democrats understand that there is work to be done to modernize and strengthen the horseracing industry, but this government simply wants to privatize all gambling and let the Donald Trumps of the world do whatever they want.

Let's take a step back, and collaborate on a real plan that will allow this industry to flourish in the future.