

Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick says casino gambling law working as it should

foxwoods.jpg

Voting checker Rock Figueroa, of Milford, Mass., right, assists a voter, left, at a polling station Tuesday, Nov. 19, 2013, in Milford, Mass. A large turnout was expected in Milford on Tuesday for a referendum on a proposed \$1 billion resort casino that would be built off Interstate 495. (AP Photo/Steven Senne) (AP)

State House News Service By **State House News Service**

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BOSTON — Following the rejection Tuesday of a proposed Foxwoods casino by Milford voters, Gov. Deval Patrick said he does not have second thoughts about the expanded gaming law that turns two years old on Friday.

With a few cities still competing for casino licenses amid dwindling competition, Patrick repeated that casinos are not central to his economic development agenda.

“No, I don’t think the law should be repealed. I think it’s working exactly as it’s supposed to, which is to authorize up to three destination resort licenses and one racino, I guess it’s called, and to let local communities make decisions about whether they wanted the facilities in their own communities,” Patrick told reporters.

East Boston, Palmer and Milford voters this month rejected casinos, but Patrick noted strong support in Springfield.

“I think this is something we can do well if we do it the right way. I think the framework of the legislation is the right framework. This has never been central to our economic growth strategy. It’s, for most people, harmless entertainment,” Patrick said.

Approaching the 50th anniversary of the assassination of John F. Kennedy in Dallas, Patrick also reflected on how he learned about the shooting as a seven-year-old in school. Though he said some of his memories have probably been “filled in over time” by watching clips and reading, he vividly recalled watching the funeral on a black-and-white television in his grandparents’ living room on the South Side of Chicago.

“It was the first time I ever saw my grandfather cry. The experience of that loss so affected people like us who were as far away from the White House as you can imagine being. It was indicative of what a profound loss it was for the country,” Patrick said.

The governor said Kennedy’s message of involvement in civic life inspired him and many of his generation to enter public service.

Asked about an election laws bill surfacing in the House Wednesday that would authorize early-voting, Patrick said, "Love that idea. Love it."

Patrick was less enthusiastic about the prospects of a question legalizing marijuana appearing on the ballot in 2016, long after he's due to leave office.

"Oh, gosh. My time is up," Patrick said, before walking off.

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