

Statement of Congressman John J. LaFalce

On September 3, 2002, when I served as a United States Congressman for the City of Buffalo, I wrote to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior and objected to the failure of government officials to follow established procedures under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) for the transfer of land for the purposes of casino gambling. I further objected to using the Seneca Nation Settlement Act to bypass and evade those procedures.

As a co-sponsor of the Seneca Nation Settlement Act (the legislation under which the Seneca Nation and the State were attempting to effect Indian "sovereignty" over land in Buffalo for casino gambling), I stated in my 2002 letter:

" . . . the land sought to be acquired and the purposes for which it is sought *are not within the scope of the Seneca Nation Settlement Act*, and the sole purpose of the application is to evade review [under IGRA, which calls for a procedure that would weigh and evaluate benefits and detriments both to the City of Buffalo and to the Seneca Nation].

I stated further in that letter:

"I cosponsored this bill because it righted the wrongs that resulted from the leases on the Alleghany Reservation. I would not have supported it, and it surely would not have passed the House and Senate by unanimous voice votes, had *any* Member thought that we were creating a loophole for Indian casino gambling in the center . . . of New York's second largest city, Buffalo."

That was my belief then; and it is my belief today.

Hon. John J. LaFalce
December 30, 2005