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## Gambling Alert - March 23, 2023



### Clout-heavy lawyer James J. Banks makes a push in video gaming

James J. Banks — a zoning lawyer, founder of Chicago’s Belmont Bank & Trust, and a former Illinois State Toll Highway Authority board member — just got into the industry, with his gaming company reporting that just two bars use his machines.

But they have something in common: Both were able to persuade the Illinois Gaming Board to set aside its concerns about their ties to unsavory characters, with Heidner at one point avoiding having his license revoked and Banks’ Gaming Productions, LLC, being awarded what’s called a terminal operator license in December. The Illinois Gaming Board reversed course then, backing away from what it previously had said were **concerns over Banks’ “associations.”**

Now, the long-timer in the business and the newcomer are jockeying behind the scenes for their share of Illinois gambling dollars at a time the industry appears headed for a major boost. That’s likely to come from the city of Chicago’s expected move to legalize video gaming. The two candidates who’ll head to head in the April 4 mayoral runoff — Brandon Johnson and Paul Vallas —

have said they'll push to do so.

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