

# Sen. Fitzgerald: Vows state intervention in strip club licensing problem

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[Madison, WI] Following a vote by the Town of Lebanon Board to renew the liquor license for TNT Gentleman's Club, Senator Scott Fitzgerald (R-Juneau) released the following statement:

"In recent weeks, municipal boards in Dodge County have renewed liquor licenses for adult entertainment establishments in Juneau, Lebanon, and Clyman. An open FBI investigation has produced evidence of human trafficking at two of these strip clubs. Reports of other crimes taking place at these establishments are well-documented.

"While local elected officials have acted responsibly by being deliberative with their decisions to renew these licenses, they have been handicapped by threats of litigation from the deep-pocketed owners of the strip clubs and their Madison-based attorneys.

"It is no coincidence that these clubs are being located in small, rural municipalities that do not have the resources to engage in expensive litigation. This imbalance has contributed to the dynamic of clubs operating with little accountability, while municipalities are feeling forced to renew these licenses to meet a statutory deadline.

“It is time for the state to step in and rectify this imbalance. I have been in contact with the Wisconsin Department of Justice and the Wisconsin Department of Revenue exploring options relating to liquor license revocation at businesses where crime is rampant. I will also be investigating the need for legislation to fix any blind spots in our state law.

“When an investigation by law enforcement results in felony indictments directly tied to the operations of a business, there must be a license revocation process that can take place without the fear of retaliatory litigation that will jeopardize a municipality’s limited budget.

“I will continue to work with state agencies on behalf of my constituents to find out a way to end this legal charade. We must put the power back in the hands of local residents who want nothing more than to ensure that their communities are safe.”