

# Senator Russell Pearce Suing the Feds to Derail Tohono O'odham's Proposed Casino ... and Glendale Is Picking up the Tab

By Monica Alonzo

published: Thu., Oct. 28 2010 @ 3:59PM



Russell Pearce

Senator Russell Pearce, best known for his immigrant-loathing views, is taking on the Tohono O'odham Nation, an Indian tribe that plans to open a resort-style casino in the West Valley.

Pearce and senate-hopeful Scott Bundgaard, now joined by about a dozen Arizona lawmakers, have filed a lawsuit against the Department of Interior. They join the City of Glendale and the Gila River Indian Community in trying to derail the casino project.

More ridiculous than a Mesa senator and other lawmakers trying to inject themselves in this ongoing legal battle is that **Glendale** is paying the Rose Law Firm to handle the lawmakers' suit, according to one of the firm's attorney.

Picking up the tab for a Pearce & Co. lawsuit is unbelievable considering that taxpayers are already shelling out money to pay for Glendale's own lawsuit filed against the feds in September.

Initially, the *Yellow Sheet* reported that Jordan Rose (of the Rose Law Firm) refused to say who was picking up the tab, citing attorney-client privilege. But, at a press conference this morning, when the lawmakers were questioned about who was paying the bill, the law firm revealed that Glendale was providing the financial support.

*New Times* called Glendale City Attorney Craig Tindall to ask about legal expenses, but he was not immediately available.

Pearce and the other Republican lawmakers involved want to turn the legal battle between the Tohono O'odham Nation and Glendale into a states vs. the federal government issue.

Tohono O'odham leaders say the lawmakers move is a "politically motivated and crass attempt to further delay" the development of The West Valley Resort, the creation of 6,000 construction jobs and more than 3,000 permanent jobs, and the infusion of an estimated \$300 million economic impact to Arizona.

The Department of Interior is at the center of the lawsuits because it approved in July the Nation's application to place into trust the land it owns near 95th and Northern avenues. Placing land into trust means that it becomes an Indian reservation. In this case, it would become an extension of the Tohono O'odham Nation reservation lands in southern and central Arizona.

[Read more](#) about why Congress approved a law in 1986 giving the Nation the right to transform a pocket of unincorporated Maricopa County land in the West Valley into an Indian reservation.

Ned Norris Jr., chairman of the Tohono O'odham Nation, said in a statement: "It is unfortunate these individuals are ignoring the opportunity for a community dialogue about how to make this project a success for the West Valley. Instead, they are doing everything they can to prevent job creation, economic activity and tourism promotion at a time when our state most desperately needs it."