



Strengthen Online Poker Bill Problem Gambling Provisions

National Council on Problem Gambling calls for changes to increase funding and authorize objective grant programs

For Immediate Release

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Washington, D.C. December 6, 2010—The National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) calls for increased funding and an objective grants program in the Prohibition of Internet Gaming, Internet Poker Regulation and UIEGA Enforcement Act. States already strain to handle the estimated \$7 billion annual social cost of gambling-related addiction, bankruptcy and crime, which may be exacerbated by the legalization of online gambling without sufficient resources to mitigate harm. NCPG neither supports nor opposes the bill.

Specifically, NCPG urges Congress to make the following changes to Sec. 9511 (c)(6):

- Expand the scope to include Prevention, Public Awareness and Treatment, as research alone cannot reduce impact of problem gambling;
- Increase annual revenue for problem gambling programs to \$15,000,000 to close the gap in services at the state level;
- Allocate these funds to the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the lead national agency on addiction services;
- Authorize SAMHSA to distribute all funds through competitive grants for problem gambling prevention, public awareness, research and treatment to non-profit organizations and state, territorial and tribal health agencies to ensure development of comprehensive solutions;
- Require operators to provide appropriate access to de-identified data on player behavior for research purposes.

In addition, NCPG urges Congress to make the following changes to Sec. 401:

- Increase to 1% the required state and tribal payments from the Internet Poker License Fee Trust Fund for problem gambling programs;
- Clarify that the support be directed to the state or tribal agency that is designated to address problem gambling issues.

These changes, taken as a whole, incorporate the main provisions of the Comprehensive Problem Gambling Act (H.R. 2906/S. 3418). CPG is a balanced, bipartisan approach with 73 sponsors in the House and 5 in the Senate. The most ethical and effective response to problem gambling issues is through a coordinated public health campaign. Problem gambling, like other diseases of addiction, will likely never be eliminated, but we can and must make better efforts to minimize the damage.

The National Council on Problem Gambling is the national advocate for programs and services to assist problem gamblers and their families. Founded in 1972 and neutral on legalized gambling, NCPG programs include the National Problem Gambling Helpline Network (800.522.4700) that received over 270,000 calls last year and 2,000,000 over the past decade.

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