



ADVANCING FAITH, FAMILY AND FREEDOM

April 1, 2014

Representative
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Family Research Council (FRC) and the families we represent, I urge you to cosponsor the bipartisan Restoration of America's Wire Act of 2014 (H.R. 4301) sponsored by Representative Jason Chaffetz (R-UT). This bill would restore the long standing federal ban on internet gambling and protect the vulnerable and their families from the 24-7 easy access of online gambling. Congress needs to act now.

On December 23, 2011, the Justice Department unilaterally gutted the Wire Act, the 50 year old prohibition against the transmission of information related to bets and wagers, by reinterpreting its application to only apply to sports-related betting. They did so without input from Congress, law enforcement or the American public. Overnight, gambling interests in cash strapped states were given an avenue to pursue online gambling without fully appraising its consequences.

There is overwhelming evidence that the prevalence of compulsive gambling is three to four times higher among online gamblers than non-internet gamblers. The 24-7 ease of access, the speed of the game, the solitary nature of play and the ability to play multiple games at once, make online gambling inherently more dangerous than other forms of gambling.

In 1999, the National Gambling Impact Study Commission (NGISC) released its three year findings recommending an explicit moratorium on gambling expansion and a complete ban of internet gambling. The NGISC reported receiving "abundant testimony and evidence that compulsive gambling introduces a greatly heightened level of stress and tension into marriages and families, often culminating in divorce and other manifestations of familial disharmony," and that "respondents representing 2 million adults identified a spouse's gambling as significant factor in a prior divorce."

While online gambling initiatives are billed as a boon to state budgets, voters and policymakers should be aware that there is no proof expanding gambling positively impacts net state revenues. In fact, there's evidence to the contrary. Gambling functions like a regressive tax that disproportionately impacts the poor, diverting money away from local businesses and displacing existing sales tax revenue while fueling societal ills.

The increase in crime, financial hardship, lost work and the break-up of families have lead professor and economist at Baylor University, Earl L. Grinols to estimate the costs of gambling outweighing its benefits 3 to 1.

Online gambling vendors claim they will be able to screen out minors, ensure player's identities and validate they are physically located within proper jurisdictions. However, the FBI countered this claim in a 2009 letter to the Financial Services Committee stating, "While the [online gambling] vendors may claim that they can validate age and location, they are more than likely relying on credit card information and geolocation to gather this information. Both can be spoofed."

Again, I urge you to cosponsor the Restoration of America's Wire Act of 2014 (H.R. 4301) sponsored by Representative Chaffetz (R-UT). This bill would protect families by restoring the Wire Act, the federal prohibition against online gambling.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Christensen".

David Christensen
Vice President of Government Affairs