

THE NATIONAL COALITION
NCAGE
AGAINST GAMBLING EXPANSION

100 Maryland Avenue NE, Room 311, Washington, DC, 20002 ~ (307) 587-8082 ~ [800-664-2680](tel:800-664-2680)

Spring, 2006

Dear friends of NCALG,

My last ten years reminds me of the Dutch boy who accidentally discovered a leak in the dike. It was a stormy night to be on his way home alone, but when he saw the trickle of water spurting through the dike, he knew his duty. The lad pulled off his gloves, stuck his finger in the hole and cried "Help!"

Our hero knew that water from the leak would cause the hole to grow larger and eventually cover the rich farms they were built to protect. After a long night of pain and determination, he was discovered the next morning by farmers who knew how to repair the damaged dike. Today, in the community of Spaarndam, there is a bronze statue of this hero who "symbolizes the perpetual struggle of Holland against the water."

Little did I realize a decade ago that I would be spending my next years sticking my finger in leaks created by the gambling industry. They were punching holes in the protective dikes that provide our legal safeguards against the menace of gambling.

In 1991 I was pastor of a congregation in the historic town of Galena, Illinois, which also is the hometown of President U.S. Grant. A call came from Chicago asking me to be part of a coalition protesting a proposed casino in the Loop of that great midwestern city. On June of 1992, my spirits were lifted as I looked at that crowd, making a united appeal, "No Casinos in Chicago." Ultimately Chicago decision makers listened to those thousands of protesters and nixed the downtown casino. The leak in that dike was stopped.

For over ten years, I have traveled throughout our nation, responding to the calls of people who are saying, "A leak has sprung in the safeguards of our society. Politicians are promising to finance our schools and health care on gambling revenues. The trickle is turning into a flood, and now we are surrounded by casinos, lotteries, poker parlors and illegal wagering on sports."

I remember the call from a handful of concerned citizens who discovered that gambling predators wanted to invade **Hawaii**. For decades the Aloha State had been spared the corruption of the gambling mentality. But predators saw the beaches, the millions of tourists, the magnificent hotels with large lobbies ready for slot machines, and dreamed of great wealth. I gathered a suitcase full of studies and statistics and flew to Honolulu. My hat goes off to that pioneering group that contacted the press, used the media, communicated with lawmakers, and defeated all efforts to flood Hawaii with gambling. Today, Hawaii continues to have no legalized wagering of any kind.

At the invitation of Dr. Dan Ireland, a co-founder of NCALG and long-time leader in **Alabama**, I spent days in his state, speaking to editors, civic clubs & church groups. Alabama's governor claimed that a lottery would solve their problems, but on Oct. 12, 1999, Alabama voters rejected a state lottery by a 54-46% vote. The leak was plugged.

My memory bank is filled with local, state and national victories in **Maine, Ohio, Kentucky, Alaska, New Mexico, California, Kansas, Nebraska, Texas, Missouri, Arkansas** and a dozen other states. I have been interviewed in *Time, People, U.S. News, Wall Street Journal* and scores of newspapers throughout our nation. I have debated proponents of gambling on radio and television. With the corruption revealed in the Abramoff gambling scandals, the national press is calling more frequently. Editors have asked me to write op-ed pieces. Always my message is the same: gambling *corrupts*, gambling *destroys*, gambling ultimately *impoverishes*.

I am hopeful about the future. With many victories behind us, I have confidence that moral forces can and will win the battle for America's future. Everywhere I travel, I find groups of citizens who sacrifice their time and their treasure in this good fight. Like my Dutch hero, they are sticking their fingers in the cracks to protect their communities. But the gambling industry has not given up. In fact, the efforts of the gambling fraternity are multiplying. Here are some of the battles that we are facing in 2006:

Illinois: Governor Rod Blagojevich announced early in January that he was going to sponsor Keno gambling in his state for school construction. I drove to Springfield to assist Anita Bedell in protesting his announcement. Anita has been a steady opponent of gambling for years. She has enlisted a broad-based coalition in the fight. We held a press conference on Jan. 11. Gratefully, opposition caused the Governor to back down, and Keno is a dead issue in Illinois. Another leak fixed.

West Virginia has turned to gambling to finance their state government. A decade ago, they voted to allow a limited number of slot machines in their racetracks. Next, they expanded the number of slots allowed. New legislation is proposed to take the next step: allow table games such as poker, craps, and roulette. When citizens protested, the Legislature resisted turning their tracks into casinos. Immediately, one track announced it would lay off 350 employees. Typical of gambling mentality, the track president threatened economic retaliation "unless table gambling is approved." As so often happens, gamblers want to control the legislature, not the other way around.

The **Kentucky** legislature is facing bills to put slot machines in their tracks to bail out the racing industry. Again, the promise is jobs, economic development, tourism and subsidizing Kentucky horse racing. Proponents want to turn Kentucky into a gambling mecca with all the entertainment trappings. A victory is possible in Kentucky.

Nebraska voters defeated a casino proposal in 2004 by a 65% vote. The victory was led by *Gambling with the Good Life*, with active leadership from Pat Loontjer, financier Warren Buffet and Congressman Tom Osborne. Did the gambling industry get the message? No, now they are back with new proposals for three Nebr. casinos.

Massachusetts will be voting on eliminating wagering on dog races in November. Slot machine backers are again proposing to install slot machines in the state's racetracks. Here is the opportunity for a *double victory* – to end dog racing and to defeat slots at Massachusetts tracks. Gov. Mitt Romney has threatened to veto any proposals to expand gambling .

Maryland lawmakers are proposing 9,500 slot machines at four locations along their major highways. A similar bill has been defeated for the past three years. Gov. Robert Ehrlich favors slot machines to help the horse racing industry. *No Casino Maryland* is our effective group in this key state. We need to hold the line.

Texas legislators have rejected slots for two consecutive years. Proponents promise to try again this year. The press predicts gambling opponents will “wage another round of trench warfare” against the gambling industry. Weston Ware, a former president of NCALG, is a leading spokesman against more Texas gambling.

Wyoming does *not* have a state lottery. As a step toward a lottery, the Legislature voted on establishing a Gaming Commission. The key vote *defeated* the proposal for a Gaming Commission. Dr. David Robertson is chairman of WYBETT – the Wyoming anti-gambling organization.

I believe that it is possible that we will win in each of the above battles. We have committed groups in each state. They are organized. They have won before and can do it again. NCALG is planning several workshops this year to share tactics, lobbying strategies, and coalition building to win the hearts and minds of others. The media covers the truth about our battles. Your continuing financial help strengthens our ability to move from state to state giving leadership.

This brings me to the crucial battle ahead in the nation's Capitol. I wrote last month about the national gambling scandal, symbolized by lobbyist Jack Abramoff, who has pleaded guilty to conspiracy, tax evasion and mail fraud. Well over 300 members of Congress, including leaders of both political parties, have received substantial contributions from Abramoff and his associates. Gambling has penetrated into the very heart of our government and corrupted the integrity of elected officials. This comes at the time when the Bureau of Indian Affairs is being deluged by a flood of proposed Indian casino locations.

Michigan, New York, Kansas, Ohio, Massachusetts, California, Washington, North Dakota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Oregon, Idaho and New Jersey are all facing efforts to build Indian casinos, primarily in city locations that are not “trust lands.” Senator John McCain is the chair of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee. His committee has held several hearings on possible revisions of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988. The Committee has examined “reservation shopping,” the \$82 million unregulated funds paid to lobbyist Jack Abramoff, the practices and failures of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the complex issues of “sovereignty.” NCALG leaders are in contact with this important committee.

NCALG endorses the efforts of Congressmen Mike Rogers and Frank Wolf to establish a two-year moratorium on new off-reservation casino efforts in Congress. I mentioned this in my last letter and urged support of this welcome move. NCALG has established contact with influential legislators in Congress. We are concerned with the 2006 and 2008 elections and who will be future legislators in our Capitol.

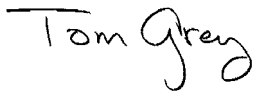
The National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling is opposed to any expansion of gambling, including Internet gambling, which originates in overseas locations, but reaches into American homes via websites and e-mail. On February 16, Dr. Guy C. Clark, head of the NCALG Board of Directors, wrote a strong letter to Congressman Bob Goodlatte, endorsing his efforts to close the door to Internet gambling in America.

Gambling is a threat that can erode the ethical and moral foundations of our country. I plan to write in the future about corruption of government, what gambling is doing to families, the explosion of youth gambling, the embezzlements, crimes and even suicides that inevitably accompanies gambling. Gambling creates no new wealth. It enriches the few and impoverishes the many. Gambling is non-productive; it is parasitic. There is no way that gambling can make our nation rich. Just do the math: the rate of savings in America is down, while our national debt has skyrocketed!

We need your help. I have attempted to describe the issues we face in our state legislatures, and the coming battle in the nation's Capitol. The media is largely on our side. Truth is our source of strength. We have many friends. Thank you for your notes of encouragement, the clippings and ads you send, and your contributions.

Please use the enclosed enlistment card and self-addressed envelope for a generous gift for this crusade. Your gift will help underwrite our workshops and support NCALG's state-by-state network. Your gift will be a symbolic "finger in the dike," as together we hold back this third historical wave of gambling in America. Thank you.

Battle on,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Grey".

Tom Grey,
NCALG Field Director