

THE NATIONAL COALITION
NCAGE
AGAINST GAMBLING EXPANSION

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Dear friends and fellow citizens on the high ground of this good fight;

Today I'm reminded that men just don't come much more "gutsy" than a decorated U.S. Marine Apache helicopter pilot, and that's what Aaron Walsh was. When he died last fall, it wasn't an Iraqi RPG, or some leftover Soviet missile in Afghanistan that brought him down. It was an American military slot machine.

Aaron's wife, Carrie, was on CNN recently explaining why the 34-year old soldier walked into the woods near Bangor, Maine, put a gun to his head and killed himself. He had gotten hooked on military-owned slot machines at a base in Germany. After several years of battling his addiction, the military booted him out because of the very disease the military had exposed him to. He went to Maine, where his wife had moved. He had been doing pretty well with his gambling addiction, but somehow those new state-sponsored Bangor slots lured him in, and tapped him out one last time.

It was the straw that broke the back of one of America's finest.

The Pentagon admits they have thousands of slot machines on U.S. bases around the world, and they think it's just fine to suck some \$130 million a year out of service men and women. They use the money to fund other recreation costs.

I think Prof. John Kindt, one of the country's most knowledgeable gambling experts, summed it up pretty well for CNN when he said, "The military should not be a predator on its own soldiers and their families. . . . To be a predator of their own people that are serving their country is outrageous." As a former infantry combat officer, I was always aware of my duty and responsibilities as a leader to accomplish the mission and to take care of the soldiers I was entrusted with. That the Pentagon would violate this responsibility to their soldiers is unconscionable.

The story could get even worse when one considers the national security risks caused by military gambling. You may recall a much-overlooked story we reprinted about a Chief Petty Officer who pawned laptop computers to pay his gambling debts – computers with top secret military information on board.

US Missile secrets pawned for casino debts

England -- Top-secret Cruise missile information ended up in a second-hand shop after a sailor sold Ministry of Defence computers to fund his gambling habit, a court martial was told. The thefts came to light only when senior American officials visited the Cruise Missile Support Agency, at Northwood, military headquarters, Middlesex, concerned that a submarine exercise had not been properly supported by computer software. Chief Petty Officer Paul Crookes, a weapons engineer, was interrogated and confessed to selling agency computers and other equipment to pay off his casino debts. Among the items were three laptops that contained sensitive files marked "Top Secret for UK/USA eyes only".

- (Story from the London *Telegraph*, Jan. 1, 2005)

You can imagine the problems that might occur if terrorists or other enemies get soldiers addicted and in their debt. Potential extortion of the worst kind is outlined in one of Kind's newest studies posted on our web site. It's titled "Gambling with Terrorism and U.S. Military Readiness."

In spite of all of this, the Pentagon told CNN, "The Department of Defense needs the revenue from gambling operations to finance its overseas morale, welfare and recreation programs." Trading addiction for morale?

This is not the U.S. government James Madison had in mind when he wrote, "It is essential to liberty that the government in general should have a common interest with the people." (The Federalist, 52)

This absolutely is not what George Washington, America's first great Commander in Chief, had in mind either.

"All Officers, non-commissioned Officers and Soldiers are positively forbid playing at Cards, and other Games of Chance. At this time of public distress, men may find enough to do in the service of their God, and their Country, without abandoning themselves to vice and immorality."

(George Washington, General Orders, Feb. 26, 1776.)

It goes without saying that Washington would have rebelled against the US government itself if he had found the army setting up casinos to fleece its own soldiers. Washington didn't have all the gambling impact studies and scientific

dissertations we have today, but he understood what gambling could do to good men and a great nation. To his nephew, he wrote:

. . . avoid Gaming. This is a vice which is productive of every possible evil. equally injurious to the morals and health of its votaries. It is the child of Avarice, the brother of inequity, the father of Mischief. It has been the ruin of many worthy familys; the loss of many a man's honor, and the cause of Suicide. To all those who enter the list, it is equally fascinating, the Successful gamester pushes his good fortune till it is over taken by a reverse; the loosing gamester, in hopes of retrieving past misfortunes goes on from bad to worse; till grown desperate, he pushes at every thing; and looses his all. . . . Few gain by this abominable practice (the profit, if any, being diffused) while thousands are injured.

(George Washington's letter to his nephew Bushrod Washington, January 15, 1873.)

A division full of today's psychiatrists and scholars couldn't have said it better. It was common sense to George Washington, and it's proven science today.

Into battle . . .

As this letter goes to press, two of the NCALG/NCAGE staff are heading into the "belly of the beast" to do battle with some of the most disappointing proponents of expanded gambling.

Former NCALG chairman David Robertson and I are on our way to the National Council of Legislators from Gambling States. David will be part of an Internet Gambling panel, and I will be debating the president of the Poker Players' Alliance. We're "taking it to them" on their own turf.

The poker group is trying to turn back the hard-fought victory we won last year as Congress passed and the President signed the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act. They've even hired the "always for sale" former Senator Alfonse D'Amato to lobby for them. Believe it or not, this alliance of card sharks is trying to claim it's a violation of their personal freedom if they aren't allowed to turn every home, every office and every Blackberry cell phone in the land into a gambling hall – the freedom which the likes of Washington, and Madison, and, yes, even Aaron Walsh, fought for.

These great men and soldiers didn't fight for the rights of card sharks to turn our homes into gambling houses, and for our states to become predators playing our citizens for "suckers." That's not my word. It's the opinion of Pulitzer Prizewinning writer Taylor Branch. Branch's acclaimed work chronicled Dr. Martin Luther King's dream of how America might some day fulfill the measure of its creed. Branch seethes at government sponsored gambling that cheats our nations most vulnerable.

Another notable American, Warren Buffet, told me in a fireside chat we recorded, "Government should be on the side of its citizens," and not "trying to get them to do something dumb."

So it will be an exciting weekend for David and I when we meet with the legislators from gambling states. We'll keep you posted on how that turns out. They'll be deciding how they stand on Internet gambling. We've already won a huge battle on that field, and we're about to win another as the US Trade Representatives work to withdraw gambling from the GATS agreements that have encouraged countries like Antigua to flood our homes and offices with illegal foreign-based virtual casinos.

We're going to win this fight if we keep the high ground and keep the pressure on Congress and the states to be accountable to "We the People" rather than to gambling promoters, their alliances and their lobbyists.

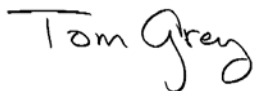
In early October, we'll be meeting again in Washington DC for our annual conference. Organizing the conference is our premier information gatherer and disseminator Dianne Berlin. There will be a lot of lobbying, news conferences and great speakers for anyone who agrees with George Washington and me, and all of you, on the subject of gambling and good government. Please plan to attend, or pass the registration information included in this mailing along to someone who might. Watch for more details on our web site, www.ncalg.org. We need all the "recruits" we can get in this campaign.

And just like General Washington, we have to find money to fund our war. Washington had lots of bills to pay when he took over the country, and today we need your help as well. This has been a sacrifice for our staff and board who have given of their time, talent and treasure, but we can't do this without help. There is a contribution form and a return mail envelope included with this letter. Please send a generous check today, and we promise we'll use every dollar you send for ammunition in this great battle.

This is a Presidential election year, and if we hope to make gambling a national campaign issue, it's going to take some effort. Topics like slot machines on military bases, international gambling trade agreements, unlawful internet gambling legislation, and out-of-control off-reservation Native American casinos are all national fights. We'll have to be engaged to win.

As citizens, together, let us build on the foundation of our fathers for the future of our children and grandchildren by making them safe from being fleeced by their own government.

Join us in this good fight.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Grey". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Tom Grey,
NCALG / NCAGE Field Director