

THE NATIONAL COALITION
NCAGE
AGAINST GAMBLING EXPANSION

100 Maryland Avenue NE, Room 311, Washington, DC, 20002 ~ (307) 587-8082

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Dear Friends

Bill Kearney, a speaker at our 2003 national conference and a gambling addict turned activist wrote to us a couple of weeks ago. He reports his state of Pennsylvania's fast shuffle to fleece its citizens is right on schedule. It's been three years since the state decided to install more slot machines than any state outside of Nevada.

The painful results are starting to trickle in. Attached to his note was the story of a convenience store manager arrested for stealing more than \$22,000 in store deposits and losing it all at the Erie "Downs and Casino."

It's a predictable, reliable progression. Gambling has a way of turning our most trusted employees, family members, and community leaders into addicts and criminals. Good people get hooked and start doing things that the people who know them best just can't believe.

Florida authorized slots recently, although they have had Indian casinos for a few years now. Just last month, a highly trusted 55 year-old woman was sent to prison for 10 years for stealing \$1.6 million from the Palm Beach County Convention and Visitors Bureau. The papers there report her husband had to sell their home and move into a mobile home, and the bureau's employees have to pay back taxes that never were deposited. Part of her defense was acknowledging her addiction to Florida's wave of gambling.

Lives ruined right on schedule – the schedule gambling promoters count on.

Perhaps our biggest challenge over the years is getting Americans to understand that what the politicians call a "painless revenue stream" is terminal to the victims and their families. And, it is costly to those who do not gamble. Ours has been a bottom-up local and state effort to win the hearts and minds of citizens as they suffer the true perils of America's gambling binge. While our efforts to nationalize this issue paid off with the National Gambling Impact Study Report, we lacked the resources to conduct a national campaign to follow up on this study.

But we've been handed an opportunity in recent weeks that will help get people involved. Tragic those these stories are, they will be "wake up calls" in an arena where a lot of Americans take a real interest: Sports.

In recent weeks, Americans were aghast that a national football hero has pleaded guilty to running a gambling operation that features dogs ripping each other apart. Gambling rips dogs, families, tribes and communities apart. These tragedies and worse are just part of the nature of gambling. They come packaged with the dice and the cards and the slot machines.

Just days ago courts were sentencing 13-year NBA veteran referee Tim Donaghy for gambling on NBA games and passing secret game information to a guy named James "Buba" Batista, AKA "Sheep" and his cohorts. The FBI uncovered that operation while investigating operations linked to the Gambino Mafia family.

Former National Hockey League player and assistant coach Rick Tocchet will serve two years probation after pleading guilty to sports gambling. He and a New Jersey state trooper joined others in a ring that operated for years. In just 40 days, that ring handled \$1.7 million in bets. The bets weren't on hockey, though. They included college bowls and the Super Bowl. (It seemed OK to him to pollute OTHER people's sports.)

This contamination of sports is predictable evidence of the corrupting progression that follows gambling. Gambling causes people to do outrageous things. It always has. Last year scores of members of the US Congress from both parties corrupted lawmaking after they received hefty campaign contributions from gambling tribes through Jack Abramoff.

Many Americans have watched in horror as friends, relatives, and coworkers have destroyed their families and lost their resources to gambling; some resorting to crime to raise money for gambling, and some even committing suicide in their despair.

Through all of this, Americans have not risen en mass to defend families and friends. Perhaps they will rise to defend sports, which will inevitably be altogether corrupted if this predator is not stopped.

Gambling transforms sports completely. In sports betting parlors, people bet on who will win the opening coin toss. They bet on who will make the next basket. They care more about point spreads than they do about who wins the contests. The whole point of the game changes. Jai Alai is a classic example of sport taken over by gambling. There players wager on such nonsense as "Select the winning quiniela in the 11th and 12th games."

Perhaps all of this will help Americans become more “convinced” than they are “surprised” about the natural and predictable behavior that gambling causes. If this nation can gather the strength of character to kick gambling out of sports, perhaps we will have the vision to remove it from our government and our communities.

If we don't, Gambling will ultimately destroy sports and a lot of other institutions we hold dear. National sport franchises know all of this better than anyone. That's why the NBA, NCAA, NHL, NFL and MLB all signed an August 14 letter against Internet gambling. These incidents of dog fights and compromised games are not anomalies. They are part of the scenery that comes with gambling.

Other items of interest:

Congress is in recess, and the dust is settling from a few off-year elections in the field.

While Washington takes a break, we know that Congressman Barney Frank (D-MA) and his Internet poker pals will be plotting their next strategy. Their hope is to blow holes in the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act (UIGEA) of 2006. He has garnered the support of a little-known Republican presidential candidate, Congressman Ron Paul (R-TX) -- but little else.

Frank's supporters, primarily foreign web gambling promoters, have been banging on the familiar keys of “personal responsibility” and “personal rights” of gambling. It sounds reasonable until one considers it really means predators have the personal right to troll America with their digital hooks looking for potential victims.

Paul is an easy fish to catch with this talk. He's one of those Constitutional minimalists who fight regulation of any kind. Those lines about “promote the general welfare,” and forming a “more perfect union” notwithstanding, Paul contends if the Constitution doesn't specifically mention it, then Congress can't regulate it.

Actually, we're happy to see Frank and Paul on the field. They help raise a banner for us to shoot at, and they make easy targets. Their arguments don't hold much water to begin with, and when we're done, they won't hold any. But just raising their issues helps get the questions into the minds of the voters and into the press. With Iraq and the economy grabbing most of the newspaper ink, it's hard to get gambling into the Presidential race and into the upcoming congressional election debates.

These guys are opening the doors for us.

As I travel across the country, I feel a bit like a guy at a carnival playing “Whack A Mole.” State and county battles have been cropping up through the spring and summer. Some of them speak volumes about grassroots organization and national support.

In May, polls showed gambling promoters ahead 70% to 30% in their quest to put a casino in Wichita, Kansas, the very heart of America's heartland. Also on the ballot was a proposal to give slots to the nearby dog track. Then, civic, religious, and political leadership waded in with an information campaign. The final outcome was 56% to 44% against the casino. The "slots at the track" vote was much closer. Just 244 votes of more than 100,000 cast in that Kansas county were enough to keep slots out of the Wichita dog track. The owner says the track will close, which is a stunning victory for Glenn Thompson and his group. Glenn is a former NCALG board member and close friend who invited me to come join the battle. "No Casinos in Sedgwick" got the message across. This was a great win for all of us. The bottom line is there is no casino coming to Wichita, and a track is closing.

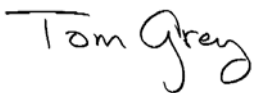
These fights are tough. The threats of "job losses" and "all that money going elsewhere" are lies that make sense if good people don't stand up and tell the truth -- that gambling can't deliver on its promises, and it can't hide its victims.

So the battle goes on. We have maintained our credibility as citizens against the gambling promoters and politicians who have used their vast money and political muscle. There is much we have done. There is much we are doing. There is much yet to be done.

We'll be in Washington in force for our Oct. 12-13 Annual Conference. Plan to join us there if you can. Conference Chair Dianne Berlin has a powerful group of speakers lined up. The details are enclosed. We'll do a news conference at the National Press Club, and, of course, we will be lobbying Congress and the agencies that influence Indian casinos and Internet gambling.

Also, please remember the fight takes resources, and use the enclosed card and envelope to send a generous donation. The battle is getting harder and it takes more all the time to stay engaged. I hope you will continue to stand with us, and contribute.

Tom Grey,

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

Field Director and National Spokesman

National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling and the
National Coalition Against Gambling Expansion