

Public Policy and Gambling: Where's the Problem?

California Problem Gambling Summit
March 11-12, 2010

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National Council on Problem Gambling



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on Problem Gambling

Outline: Why Do We Have Such a Hard Time Getting Awareness and Services?

- Problem Gambling as Public Health issue
 - organic disorder, obligation of all government to address, heightened who have legalized gambling
- Role of Feds
 - Health agencies
 - Fed legislation
- Role of NCPG
 - advocacy



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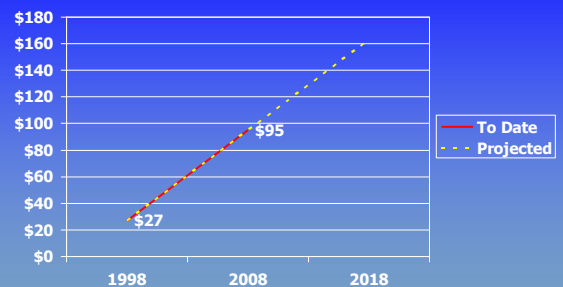
A (Very) Brief History

- Gambling (especially related to divination) is one of the oldest activities.
 - Why do dice have pips and not numbers?
Recognizable dice date back to 1,300 BC but the Hindu-Arabic number system only originated 700 AD—2,000 years later!!!!
- Americans may be more prone to take risks—immigrants, pioneers, entrepreneurs...
- But also a deep rooted tradition of viewing gambling as a sin—gamblers (especially addicts) were seen as godless, greedy, guilty...
- In the US, gambling is generally illegal unless a certain form has been specifically legalized.



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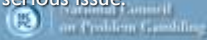
Legal Gambling Revenue (\$billions)



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Why A National Issue? 5 P's

- **Presence:** Legal in 48 states.
- **Participation:** 85% of American adults have gambled at least once in their lifetimes:
 - 65% at least once in past year;
 - 30% at least once in past month;
 - 15% at least once in past week.
- **Prevalence:** 2-3% meet criteria for a gambling disorder = **4-6 million adults + 500,000 adolescents.**
- **Problems:** In addition to personal financial, emotional and physical harm, cost to society from gambling-related crime, bankruptcy, divorce, etc...**\$6.9 billion.**
- **Perception:** Large majorities believe problem gambling is a serious issue.



National (Conflicting) Perceptions

- 65% believe gambling is morally acceptable **BUT..**
- 70% say legalized gambling encourages people to gamble more than they can afford.
 - Gallup (2005), Pew Research Center (2006)
- 32% believe problem gambling is mostly a personal or moral weakness, 13% mostly a disease, 51% both **BUT...**
- 68% think controlling compulsive gambling is mostly a matter of willpower.
 - Ipsos-Reid (2008)



Federal Government (Generally, Hopefully or Frighteningly) Reflects Our Priorities

- **Not a single cent** of the **\$3.55 trillion** Federal budget is dedicated to problem gambling.
- Not a single person in the entire Federal government has problem gambling in their job responsibility or description.
- As a result, what programs we have been able to get are generally ad-hoc, one-time and use extremely scarce discretionary funds.



About NCPG

- The national **ADVOCATE** for programs and services to assist problem gamblers and their families.
- Founded in 1972.
- **NEUTRAL** on legalized gambling.
- National grassroots non-profit with chapters in 35 of 50 states, including CA.
- Work with government, gaming industry & community.

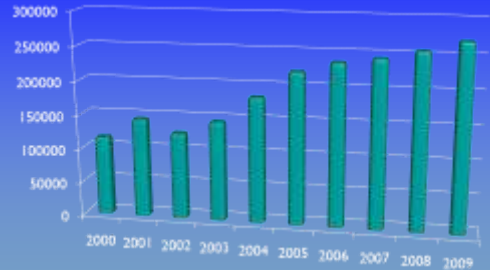


Core Programs

- Helpline Number (800.522.4700) & Network
- Nat'l Problem Gambling Awareness Week
- 24th Annual Conference on Problem Gambling Prevention, Treatment, Research & Recovery (June 9-12, Portland, OR)
- Public Awareness & Media
- Certification Administration
- **ADVOCACY!**



Total Calls 2000-2009: 2 Million



Comprehensive Problem Gambling Act of 2009

- **Authorizes** Federal health agencies to address PG and **appropriates \$71,000,000** for grants.
- House version introduced June 2009 as H.R. 2906; referred to Committee on Energy & Commerce, Health Subcommittee.
- Senate version expected to be introduced March 2010, expected to be referred to Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee.



43 Current House Sponsors

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ➤ Baldwin, Tammy (D-WI) | ➤ Cummings, Elijah (D-MD) |
| ➤ Berkley, Shelley (D-NV) | ➤ DeGette, Diana (D-CO) |
| ➤ Berman, Howard (D-CA) | ➤ DeLauro, Rosa (D-CT) |
| ➤ Boswell, Leonard (D-IA) | ➤ Dent, Charlie (R-PA) |
| ➤ Braley, Bruce (D-IA) | ➤ Forbes, Randy (R-VA) |
| ➤ Carnahan, Russ (D-MO) | ➤ Frank, Barney (D-MA) |
| ➤ Capuano, Michael (D-MA) | ➤ Hare, Phil (D-IL) |
| ➤ Castle, Michael N. (R-DE) | ➤ Hastings, Alcee (D-FL) |
| ➤ Cleaver, Emanuel (D-MO) | ➤ Holmes-Norton, Eleanor (D-DC) |
| ➤ Cohen, Steve (D-TN) | ➤ Kennedy, Patrick (D-RI) |
| ➤ Connelly, Gerald (D-VA) | ➤ Latham, Tom (R-IA) |
| ➤ Courtney, Joe (D-CT) | ➤ Maloney, Carolyn (D-NY) |



House Sponsors Continued

- Moran, Jim (D-VA)
- McDermott, Jim (D-WA)
- McNerney, Jerry (D-CA)
- Murphy, Christopher (D-CT)
- Napolitano, Grace (D-CA)
- Perriello, Tom (D-VA)
- Pitts, Joseph (R-PA)
- Platts, Todd (R-PA)
- Rogers, Mike J. (R-MI)
- Rush, Bobby (D-IL)
- Ryan, Tim (D-OH)
- Sarbanes, John (D-MD)
- Schkowsky, Jan (D-IL)
- Terry, Lee (R-NE)
- Titus, Dina (D-NV)
- Tonko, Paul (D-NY)
- Wasserman-Schultz, Debbie (D-FL)
- Welch, Peter (D-VT)
- Wolf, Frank (R-VA)



Sponsor Breakdown

- Democrats: 34 of 256 = 13%
- **Republicans: 9 of 177 = 5%**
- California Representatives: only 3 of 53!
- General advocacy resources:
www.ncpgambling.org/advocacy
- Federal legislative resources:
<http://thomas.loc.gov>



Section 3: SAMHSA Authorities

- Designates Federal lead.
- Improve coordination and collaboration among states.
- Synergistic benefit from coordinated approaches.
- Provide technical assistance and guidance to states.



Section 4: Public Awareness

- Model after other successful public health initiatives.
- Create common themes, look and feel to augment existing state and local community efforts.
- Early identification and intervention key to reducing harm.
- Appropriation of **\$200,000** per year for **5 years** = **\$1,000,000** total.



Section 5: Research

- States unable to fund meaningful research independently.
- Encourages collaboration between universities and existing programs to identify policies and services that produce positive outcomes.
- Supports the goal of improving efficiency and effectiveness of problem gambling services.
- Appropriation of **\$4,000,000** per year for **5 years = \$20,000,000** total.



Section 6: Treatment

- Only 24 states provide any funding for problem gambling treatment.
- Encourages public/private partnerships to meet identified needs.
- Intended to fill gaps in services.
- Appropriation of **\$10,000,000** per year for **5 years = \$50,000,000** total.



Moving Forward Together

- To raise public awareness AND increase understanding/reduce stigma;
- To bring Federal agencies and resources;
- To promote the most efficient and effective services...
- **We MUST join together to ensure PROBLEM GAMBLING concerns are incorporated into all GAMBLING and HEALTH POLICY decisions.**



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