

# PRESS RELEASE

## Congressman John Conyers, Jr.

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Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary  
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### CONYERS INTRODUCES INTERNET GAMBLING REGULATION STUDY COMMISSION BILL

WASHINGTON -- Representative John Conyers, Jr., along with Representatives Cannon, Berkley, and Baca, today introduced legislation to create a commission to make recommendations as to how the States might regulate Internet gambling. Representative Conyers issued the following statement regarding the legislation:

“You might remember a failed experiment the U.S. government tried in the 1920s called Prohibition. Today, Congress is rushing to pass a similar ill-conceived prohibition of Internet gambling. Gaming prohibitionists believe they can stop the millions of Americans who gamble online by prohibiting the use of credit cards to gamble on the Internet. Just as outlawing alcohol did not work in the 1920s, current attempts to prohibit online gaming will not work, either.

“Instead of a prohibition that will drive gambling underground and into the hands of unscrupulous merchants, Congress should examine the feasibility of strictly licensing and regulating the online gaming industry. State regulation will ensure that gaming companies play fair and drive out dishonest operators. It also provides potential tax revenue for financially-strapped States.

“That is why today I am introducing legislation to create an Internet Gambling Licensing and Regulation Study Commission to evaluate how to regulate online gambling to protect consumers, provide badly needed tax revenue, and prevent criminal elements from penetrating this industry. The Commission will explore whether the same conditions that afford safety and fair play in land-based casinos can exist for Internet-based casinos. It will also study whether money laundering, underage gambling, and gambling addictions are better addressed by an ineffective ban or by strict State regulation.

“Until now, Republicans and Democrats have stood together against those who wanted to cut off access to the Internet, restrict its boundaries, or use it for some special purpose. Except in the narrow areas of child pornography and other obvious criminal activities, Congress has rejected attempts to make Internet Service Providers, credit card companies, and the technology industry policemen for the Internet. We should not head down this road now. If we do, we’ll be joining countries like Iraq, China, and other totalitarian regimes who limit their citizens’ access to the Internet.

“Attempts to prohibit Internet gambling in the name of fighting crime and protecting children and problem gamblers will have the opposite effect. Prohibition will simply drive the gaming industry underground, thereby attracting the least desirable operators who will be out of the reach of law enforcement. A far better approach is to allow the States to strictly license and regulate the Internet gambling industry, to foster honest merchants who are subject to U.S. consumer protection and criminal laws.”

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