

The Honorable John Boehner
Office of the Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

May 17, 2012

Dear Speaker Boehner,

Six years ago, Congress voted overwhelmingly to protect vulnerable communities within our country as well as the integrity of professional sports by stopping the expansion of gambling on the internet. Unfortunately Congress' clear intent in the Unlawful Internet Gambling Act of 2006 (UIGEA) is now under assault and we are writing to urge you to work once again to protect those most at risk from the proliferation of illegal internet gambling.

A pro-internet gambling coalition of large states desperate for more revenue and foreign-owned gambling companies have lobbied the Executive Branch to get around Congress' intended protections and late last year they received an extraordinary boost from an unlikely source: Attorney General Eric Holder. On Friday, December 23, 2011, the Justice Department (DOJ) announced it was upending more than five decades of consistent interpretation of the 1961 Wire Act which prohibited all gambling over the internet with a new opinion that the law simply applied to online sports gambling.

The Wall Street Journal described what happened next: "When the U.S. Justice Department in December narrowed its interpretation of the 50-year-old Wire Act, saying it banned only sports betting and not other forms of online gambling, the decision sparked hope in state capitals that lotteries could start selling tickets online and lead a charge into online gambling." The "charge into online gambling" was exactly what Congress intended to prevent – with very good reason.

DOJ's determination has opened the flood gates for states to accelerate plans, many already underway, to go even beyond ticket sales to offer casino-like games on the Internet under the umbrella of their state lottery system. The CEO of the leading provider of lottery services in the United States has said, "The DOJ ruling does not limit the sale of authorized products solely to state lotteries. I think it's possible that if lotteries are beat to market, they could be tarnished by the early entrants and also risk losing the ability to attract younger players."

It's those "younger players" and other vulnerable populations like seniors who are at the most serious risk. Ninety-three percent (93%) of teens age 12-17 utilize the Internet and 97% of

teens of the same age participate in some form of on-line gaming making them attractive targets for gambling marketing as well as illegal and fraudulent operators.

Congress still has an opportunity to act to reassert its authority and re-establish its intent to prevent the proliferation of online gambling in the U.S. By reinstating the more than 50-year old interpretation of the Wire Act and actually strengthening UIGEA, you can protect our children and families from the erosion of safeguards Congress has previously established. We, the undersigned, stand ready to work with you to undertake this vital effort.

Sincerely,

Gary Bauer
American Values

Phyllis Schlafly
Eagle Forum

Dr. Richard Land
Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty
Commission

Bill Donohue
Catholic League for Religious & Civil Rights

David Barton
WallBuilders

Colin Hanna
Let Freedom Ring

Matt Smith
Catholic Advocate

Tom McClusky
Family Research Council Action

William J. Murray
Religious Freedom Coalition

Jim Backlin
Christian Coalition

Jim Martin
60 Plus Association

Penny Nance
Concerned Women for America