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Cyber-safety Charity WiredSafety Supports Online Gaming Regulation But Opposes Unrealistic Attempts to Ban All Online Gaming

The world's largest online safety and help group and charity, WiredSafety, founded and run by cyber-safety expert and child advocate Dr. Parry Aftab, is devoted to protecting consumers, seniors, families, parents and children online.

After more than a two decades of analyzing Internet gaming, WiredSafety has reached the conclusion that the best way to protect families and consumers from potential fraud, identity theft, money laundering, underage gambling, privacy intrusions and other online crime is through legalization and regulation, not prohibition.

Attempting to prohibit online gaming and pretending it does not exist in our interconnected world is naïve. Unfortunately, this approach can be very risky for US seniors, consumers, families and children. Americans currently spend approximately $6 billion per year on offshore and US unregulated Internet gaming and the consumer demand is continuing to grow and expand.

The unintended but inevitable result of any attempt by Congress to ban all Internet gaming would feed the coffers of black market sites out of the reach of U.S. courts and regulators, exposing Americans to significant risks without legal recourse. Prohibition did not work in the past, and it will not work today. But, careful regulatory schemes will.

The only way to effectively police and prevent fraud, cyber scams, and gaming abuses is to regulate trustworthy companies to develop licensed online gaming avenues that manage the risks and are subject to US regulatory oversight.
Such regulations should include: auditing of the fairness of the games and player practices, enhanced security tools and technologies for age verification, consumer education, parental control technologies, effective dispute resolution systems and recourse against fraud, and problem gaming technologies and help resources.

Unless we take this approach the U.S. will continue to find itself in the unfortunate position of incurring all the social costs of online gaming while having abdicated control over the gaming sites accessed by its consumers to the Internet wild west and, in some cases foreign regulatory jurisdictions.

While all gambling is, by its nature risky, and something WiredSafety does not endorse either online or offline, unregulated gaming is substantially worse. We need well-thought-out help from government.

About WiredSafety

WiredSafety (www.wiredsafety.org) is a 501(c)(3) charity and is the world's oldest and largest online safety, education, and self-help organization. WiredSafety works in four major areas: help for online victims of cybercrime and harassment; assisting law enforcement worldwide on preventing and investigating cybercrimes; education; and providing information on all aspects of online safety, privacy and security. It has weighed in on online gambling/gaming issues since 1996.