To amend the Public Health Service Act to specifically include, in programs of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, programs to research, prevent, and treat the harmful consequences of pathological and other problem gambling, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 23, 2011

Mr. Moran (for himself, Ms. Berkley, Mr. Hastings of Florida, and Mr. Wolf) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to specifically include, in programs of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, programs to research, prevent, and treat the harmful consequences of pathological and other problem gambling, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Comprehensive Problem Gambling Act of 2011”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:
(1) Problem gambling is a public health disorder characterized by increasing preoccupation with gambling, loss of control, restlessness or irritability when attempting to stop gambling, and continuation of the gambling behavior in spite of mounting, serious, negative consequences.

(2) Over 6,000,000 adults met criteria for a gambling problem last year.

(3) The estimated social cost to families and communities from bankruptcy, divorce, job loss, and criminal justice costs associated with problem gambling was $6,700,000,000 last year.

(4) Problem gambling is associated with higher incidences of bankruptcy, domestic abuse, and suicide.

(5) People who engage in problem gambling have high rates of co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders.

(6) In response to current budget shortfalls, many States are considering enacting or have enacted legislation to expand legal gambling activities with the intent of raising State revenues.

(7) The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration is the lead Federal agency for substance abuse and mental health services.
(8) There are no agencies or individuals in the Federal Government with formal responsibility for problem gambling.

SEC. 3. INCLUSION OF AUTHORITY TO TREAT GAMBLING IN SAMHSA AUTHORITIES.

Section 501(d) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 290aa(d)) is amended—

(1) by striking “and” at the end of paragraph (17);

(2) by striking the period at the end of paragraph (18) and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(19) establish and implement programs for the prevention, treatment, and research of pathological and other problem gambling.”.

SEC. 4. PROGRAMS TO RESEARCH, PREVENT, AND ADDRESS PROBLEM GAMBLING.

Title V of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 290aa et seq.) is amended—

(1) by redesignating part G (42 U.S.C. 290kk et seq.), relating to services provided through religious organizations and added by section 144 of the Community Renewal Tax Relief Act of 2000 (114 Stat. 2763A–619), as enacted into law by section 1(a)(7) of Public Law 106–554, as part J;
(2) by redesignating sections 581 through 584 of that part J as sections 596 through 596C, respectively; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“PART K—PROGRAMS TO RESEARCH, PREVENT, AND ADDRESS PROBLEM GAMBLING

“SEC. 597. PUBLIC AWARENESS.

“(a) In General.—The Secretary, acting through the Administrator, shall carry out a national campaign to increase knowledge and raise awareness within the general public with respect to problem gambling issues. In carrying out the campaign, the Secretary shall carry out activities that include augmenting and supporting existing (as of the date of the support) national campaigns and producing and placing public service announcements.

“(b) Voluntary Donations.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary may—

“(1) coordinate the voluntary donation of, and administer, resources to assist in the implementation of new programs and the augmentation and support of existing national campaigns to provide national strategies for dissemination of information, intended to treat problem gambling, from—

“(A) television, radio, motion pictures, cable communications, and the print media;
“(B) the advertising industry;
“(C) the business sector of the United States; and
“(D) professional sports organizations and associations; and
“(2) encourage media outlets throughout the country to provide information, aimed at preventing problem gambling, including public service announcements, documentary films, and advertisements.
“(e) FOCUS.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall target radio and television audiences of events including sporting and gambling events.
“(d) EVALUATION.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall evaluate the effectiveness of activities under this section. The Secretary shall submit a report to the President and Congress containing the results of the evaluation.

“SEC. 597A. RESEARCH.
“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting through the Administrator, shall establish and implement a national program of research on problem gambling.
“(b) NATIONAL GAMBLING IMPACT STUDY COMMISSION REPORT.—In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall consider the recommendations that appear in chapter
8 of the June 18, 1999, report of the National Gambling Impact Study Commission.

SEC. 597B. TREATMENT.

“The Secretary shall develop a treatment improvement protocol specific to problem gambling.

SEC. 597C. PREVENTION.

“The Secretary, acting through the Administrator, shall integrate problem gambling into existing alcohol, tobacco and other drug prevention programs, where practical.”.