

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2906

To amend the Public Health Service Act to specifically include problem and pathological gambling in programs of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and to establish a national program to address the harmful consequences of problem gambling.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 16, 2009

Mr. MORAN of Virginia (for himself, Mr. TERRY, Mr. WOLF, and Mr. BERMAN) 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 problem and pathological gambling in programs of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and to establish a national program to address the harmful consequences of problem gambling.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Comprehensive Prob-
5 lem Gambling Act of 2009”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

1 (1) Problem gambling is a public health dis-
2 order characterized by increasing preoccupation with
3 gambling, loss of control, restlessness or irritability
4 when attempting to stop, and continuation of the
5 gambling behavior in spite of mounting, serious,
6 negative consequences.

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

9 (3) The estimated social cost to families and
10 communities from bankruptcy, divorce, job loss, and
11 criminal justice costs associated with problem gam-
12 bling was \$6,700,000,000 last year.

13 (4) Problem gambling is associated with higher
14 incidence of bankruptcy, domestic abuse, and sui-
15 cide.

16 (5) Problem gamblers have high rates of co-oc-
17 curring substance abuse and mental health dis-
18 orders.

19 (6) In response to current budget shortfalls,
20 many States are considering or have enacted legisla-
21 tion to expand legal gambling activities with the in-
22 tent of raising State revenues.

23 (7) The Substance Abuse and Mental Health
24 Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the lead Fed-

1 eral agency for substance abuse and mental health
2 services.

3 (8) There are no agencies or individuals in the
4 Federal Government with a formal responsibility for
5 problem gambling.

6 **SEC. 3. INCLUSION OF GAMBLING IN SAMHSA AUTHORI-**
7 **TIES.**

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

10 (1) by striking “and” at the end of paragraph
11 (17);

12 (2) by striking the period at the end of para-
13 graph (18) and inserting “; and”; and

14 (3) by adding at the end the following:

15 “(19) establish and implement programs for the
16 identification, prevention, and treatment of problem
17 and pathological gambling.”.

18 **SEC. 4. PUBLIC AWARENESS.**

19 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and
20 Human Services (in this Act referred to as the “Sec-
21 retary”) shall carry out a national campaign to increase
22 knowledge and raise awareness with respect to problem
23 gambling issues within the general public, including sup-
24 porting and augmenting existing national campaigns and

1 the production and placement of public service announce-
2 ments.

3 (b) VOLUNTARY DONATIONS.—In carrying out sub-
4 section (a), the Secretary shall—

5 (1) administer and coordinate the voluntary do-
6 nation of resources to assist in the implementation
7 of new programs and the augmentation of existing
8 national campaigns to provide national strategies for
9 dissemination of information intended to address
10 problem gambling from—

11 (A) the television, radio, motion picture,
12 cable communications, and print media;

13 (B) the advertising industry;

14 (C) the business sector of the United
15 States; and

16 (D) professional sports organizations and
17 associations; and

18 (2) encourage media outlets throughout the
19 country to provide information aimed at preventing
20 problem gambling, including public service an-
21 nouncements, documentary films, and advertise-
22 ments.

23 (c) FOCUS.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Sec-
24 retary shall target radio and television audiences of, but
25 not limited to, sporting and gambling events.

1 (d) EVALUATION.—In carrying out subsection (a),
2 the Secretary shall evaluate and report to the President
3 and to the Congress on the effectiveness of activities under
4 this section.

5 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—For the
6 purpose of carrying out this section, there is authorized
7 to be appropriated \$200,000 for each of fiscal years 2010
8 through 2014.

9 **SEC. 5. RESEARCH.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—The President shall establish and
11 implement a national program of research on problem
12 gambling.

13 (b) COORDINATION.—In carrying out this section, the
14 President shall appoint an advisory commission, including
15 individuals not currently employed by the Federal Govern-
16 ment, to coordinate the activities of Federal agencies relat-
17 ing to research on problem gambling, including the activi-
18 ties of the National Institutes of Health, the National
19 Science Foundation, the National Institute of Justice, the
20 Bureau of Justice Statistics, and the Substance Abuse and
21 Mental Health Services Administration.

22 (c) NATIONAL GAMBLING IMPACT STUDY COMMIS-
23 SION REPORT.—In carrying out this section, the President
24 shall consider the recommendations that appear in chapter

1 8 of the June 18, 1999, report of the National Gambling
2 Impact Study Commission.

3 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—For the
4 purpose of carrying out this section, there is authorized
5 to be appropriated \$4,000,000 for each of fiscal years
6 2010 through 2014.

7 **SEC. 6. TREATMENT.**

8 (a) GRANTS.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may make
10 grants to States, local, and tribal governments, and
11 nonprofit agencies to provide comprehensive services
12 with respect to treatment and prevention of problem
13 gambling issues and education about problem gam-
14 bling issues.

15 (2) APPLICATION FOR GRANT.—A grant may be
16 made under paragraph (1) only if an application for
17 the grant is submitted to the Secretary and the ap-
18 plication is in such form, is made in such manner,
19 and contains such agreements, assurances, and in-
20 formation as the Secretary determines to be nec-
21 essary to carry out this subsection.

22 (3) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—For
23 the purpose of carrying out this subsection, there is
24 authorized to be appropriated \$10,000,000 for each
25 of fiscal years 2010 through 2014.

1 (b) TREATMENT IMPROVEMENT PROTOCOL.—The
2 President, acting through the Administrator of the Sub-
3 stance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration,
4 shall develop a treatment improvement protocol specific to
5 problem gambling.

6 **SEC. 7. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

7 It is the sense of the Congress that every State should
8 contribute a percentage of its revenue from gambling to-
9 wards prevention and treatment of problem gambling and
10 towards research services and education about problem
11 gambling.

