sports gambling are being advanced here in the House of Representatives.

I have long been concerned about protecting American athletics from the taint of gambling. I cosponsored the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act of 1992, when arrested the growth of state-sponsored sports betting. As Congress said then, ''Sports gambling threatens to change the nature of sporting events from wholesome entertainment for all ages to devices for gambling. It undermines public confidence in the character of professional and amateur sports.''

Now H.R. 2046 threatens to let offshore online gambling operators do through the backdoor what PASPA shut off to states through the front door. And the proponents of sports gambling are making the same arguments that they did in the early 1990s: legal sportsbooks have the technology and incentive to identify suspicious activity and prevent actual corruption of the game; people are going to gamble on sports anyway, so the government might as well capture tax revenue on the activity.

Congress rejected those arguments then, and they should reject them now. The fundamental issue has never been whether the technology existed to prevent abusive sports gambling. The fundamental issue is this: regardless of what happens between friends or on the black market, Congress should not be in the business of encouraging people to gamble on sports. And sports gambling should be off limits from further exploitation as a ''revenue enhancer.''

This is an essential principle, that gambling and sports do not mix. Even though H.R. 2046 says sports leagues can ''opt out'' of allowing gambling on their sport, Congress would still be sending the wrong message about sports gambling. Moreover, the sports associations have very serious concerns that the ''opt-outs'' could be struck down by U.S. courts or international tribunals, leaving their sports completely unprotected.

As their letter says, ''the harms caused by government endorsement of sports betting far exceed the alleged benefits.'' Therefore, I will not support any movement on H.R. 2046 so long as it poses any threat to the integrity of American athletics.

Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to place in the RECORD the letter signed by the General Counsels of the National Football League, Major League Baseball, National Basketball Association, National Hockey League, and National Collegiate Athletic Association.

JULY 30, 2007.

DEAR MEMBER OF CONGRESS: Sports betting is incompatible with preserving the integrity of American athletics. For many decades, we have actively enforced strong policies against sports betting. And the law on this point is consistent. Federal statutes bar sports betting, especially the 1961 Wire Act and the 1992 Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act. Enforcement of these laws against sports betting was also a significant motive for enacting the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act of 2006 (UIGEA).

Accordingly, we urge you to reject current proposals to legalize Internet gambling, such as H.R. 2046 sponsored by Rep. Barney Frank. This legislation reverses federal policy on sports betting and would for the first time give such gambling Congressional consent. The bill sends exactly the wrong message to the public about sports gambling and threatens to undermine the integrity of American sports.

On a related point, we believe the Congress should not consider any liberalization of Internet gambling until the U.S. Trade Representative successfully resolves our trade disputes in this area. A rush to judgment on this subject could result in irreversible damage to U.S. sovereignty in the area of gambling regulation, including the capacity to prohibit sports bets.

Though Internet gambling on sports has never been legal, easy access to offshore Internet gambling websites has created the opposite impression among the general public, particularly before Congress enacted UIGEA last fall. UIGEA emerged from more than a decade of Congressional consideration, in which stand-alone legislation aimed at restricting Internet gambling passed either the Senate or the House in each of five successive Congresses, each time by overwhelming bi-partisan votes. UIGEA also enjoyed a broad array of supporters, including 49 state Attorneys General and other law enforcement associations, several major financial institutions and technology companies, dozens of religious and family organizations, and of course our sports organizations.

Enactment of UIGEA was grounded on concerns about addictive, compulsive, and underage Internet gambling, unlawful sports betting, potential criminal activity, and the wholesale evasion of federal and state laws. When it passed the House a year ago, the vote was 317–93, including majorities of both caucuses and with the affirmative votes of both party leaders.

The final product was a law that did not change the legality of any gambling activity—it simply gave law enforcement new, effective tools for enforcing existing state and federal gambling laws. UIGEA and its predecessor bills could attract such consensus because they adhered to this principle: whether you think gambling liberalization is a bad idea or a good one, the policy judgments of State legislatures and Congress must be respected, not de facto repealed by deliberate evasion of the law by offshore entities via the Internet.

By contrast, H.R. 2046 would put the Treasury Department in charge of issuing licenses to Internet gambling operators, who would then be immunized from prosecution or liability under any Federal or State law that prohibits what the Frank bill permits. The bill would tear apart the fabric of American gambling regulation. By overriding in one stroke dozens of Federal and State gambling laws. this would amount to the greatest expansion of legalized gambling ever enacted.

This legislation contains an ''opt-out'' that appears to permit individual leagues to prohibit gambling on their sports. But regardless of the ''opt-out,'' the bill breaks terrible new ground, because Congress would for the first time sanction sports betting. That is reason enough to oppose it. In addition, the bill's safeguard opt-out for sports leagues as well as the one for states may well prove illusory and ineffectual. They will be subject to legal challenge before U.S. courts and the World Trade Organization.

In addition, this legislation would dramatically complicate current trade negotiations concerning gambling. In 1994, the United States signed the General Agreement on Trade in Services, which included a commitment to free trade in ''other recreational services.'' In subsequent WTO proceedings, the United States has claimed this commitment never included gambling services. The United States has noted that any such ''commitment'' would contradict a host of federal and state laws that regulate and restrict gambling. The WTO has not accepted this argument.

Accordingly, the U.S. Trade Representative has initiated negotiations to withdraw gambling from U.S. GATS commitments. Before withdrawal can be finalized, agreement must be reached on trade concessions with interested trading partners. Few concessions should be required because there was never a legal market in Internet gambling in the U.S. If Congress creates a legal market before withdrawal is complete, the withdrawal will become much more complicated and costly. Therefore, we oppose any legislation that would imperil the withdrawal process.

Finally, we have heard the argument that Internet gambling can actually protect the integrity of sports because of the alleged capacity to monitor gambling patterns more closely in a legalized environment. This argument is generally asserted by those who would profit from legalized gambling and the same point was raised in 1992 when PASPA was enacted. Congress dismissed it then and should dismiss it now. The harms caused by government endorsement of sports betting far exceed the alleged benefits.

H.R. 2046 sets aside decades of federal precedent to legalize sports betting and exposes American gambling laws to continuing jeopardy in the WTO. We strongly urge that you oppose it. Thank you for considering our views on this matter.

Sincerely,

RICK BUCHANAN, Executive, *VP and General Counsel, National Basketball Association.*
ELSA KIRCHER COLE, *General Counsel, National Collegiate Athletic Association.*
WILLIAM DALY, *Deputy Commissioner, National Hockey League.*
TOM OSTERTAG, *Senior VP and General Counsel, Major League Baseball.*
JEFFREY PASH, *Executive VP and General Counsel, National Football League.*

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 1, 2007

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 781, had I been present, I would have voted ''aye.''

SUPPORT OF THE COMMUNITY BROADBAND ACT OF 2007

HON. RICK BOUCHER

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 1, 2007

Mr. BOUCHER. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce the Community Broadband Act of 2007 in which I am pleased to be joined by the gentleman from Michigan, Mr. UPTON. I appreciate his co-authorship of the measure and the steps we have taken together to construct the bill.

Our legislation will encourage the deployment of high speed networks by ensuring the ability of local governments to offer community broadband services.

Broadband has changed the way that people in our Nation live, work, transact business and obtain information. The ways people work and play today are fundamentally different from a decade ago, due in significant part to the growth and development of the Internet, faster and more efficient ways to access it and the broad new range of Internet based services now in common use.

But for our citizens to be able to reap the benefits of this transformation, they must have access to broadband, and the United States has fallen woefully behind other developed nations in its deployment. According to the most recent statistics released by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the United States has dropped from 12th in the world to 15th for broadband penetration. The nation that invented the Internet and today creates its most popular globally utilized applications can and for the sake of our national economy must do better than that.

Most of the areas in the U.S. that lack broadband are lightly populated rural regions. Almost 20 percent of households nationwide are not served by a broadband provider, and others are served by a single provider that may charge higher rates for the service given the absence of competition. In my district, for example, we have a county with a population of 16,000 people where the most populous town has 614 residents. That county has no broadband service. I represent dozens of small communities with populations measuring in the hundreds of people where broadband is absent. That pattern is replicated across rural America, and our current global standing is a reflection of it.

It is no surprise that building out broadband to such areas is a low priority for cable and telephone service providers, but that reality does not make broadband any less essential to the lives of unserved rural residents. If the commercial broadband providers are not willing to deploy in particular areas, local governments should be able to step in and fill the gap.

At the turn of the last century, when the private sector failed to provide electricity services to much of America, thousands of community leaders stepped forward to form their own electric utilities. At that time, opponents to municipally-operated electric utilities argued that local governments were not qualified to meet this task. They also argued that competition from the private sector would be hindered by the entry of municipalities into the market. Those arguments did not prevail because it was deemed to be in the public interest to deploy the then new ''essential infrastructure'' universally, and today we have thriving municipal electric utilities nationwide that have well served their localities for the past century .

I believe that broadband today is the new essential infrastructure. It is every bit as necessary today as electricity service was 100 years ago, and just as with electricity service 100 years ago, in many instances, the only entity willing to provide the service today is the local government.

The Community Broadband Act of 2007 ensures that local leaders can bring broadband technology to their communities, just as local leaders did with electricity a century ago. More than 14 States have passed laws restricting public communications services. The U.S. Supreme Court has upheld the power of States to enact these barriers. Our legislation removes the barriers. It leaves room for States to enact reasonable terms and conditions under which local governments can deploy broadband, but it overturns absolute bars to localities offering the service.

The bill includes competitive safeguards to ensure that public providers cannot abuse governmental authority by discriminating in favor of a public service to the disadvantage of private competitors.

Community broadband networks have the potential to create jobs and increase economic development, enhance market competition, and accelerate universal, affordable Internet access for all Americans. Let's give localities the freedom to create arrangements that work for them, whether they own the infrastructure and offer the service or whether they deploy the facilities and lease the lines to private service providers. The national interest requires that we harness the willingness of localities to elevate our world standing and to enrich the lives of their constituents and the economic prospects of local businesses that urgently need broadband services.

I encourage our colleagues to join Congressman UPTON and me in enacting the Community Broadband Act of 2007.

FARM, NUTRITION, AND BIOENERGY ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 27, 2007

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2419) to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes:

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chairman, while I was very supportive of the great work that was done by House Agriculture Committee Chairman PETERSON on the farm bill, there is one provision that I have significant concerns about and I will work to ensure that the language is removed from the bill before it is enacted into law.

The farm bill contains language that would change the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act that would allow state inspected meat and poultry products to be sold in interstate commerce. Current law limits the sale of state-inspected meat and poultry products to the state in which they were produced. The stated purpose of the provision is to encourage the creation of new small meat and poultry processing businesses and give farmers new markets for their products. Because current law permits state-inspection programs but requires that they be ''equal to'' the federal program, supporters of this provision insist there would be no health risk in permitting state-inspected products to be sold any where.

However, do not be misled by the argument—the proposed change in the law would create a serious threat to public health and result in the serious weakening of the federal meat and poultry inspection programs. Instead of creating new markets for farmers, the reduced health standard that this provision would establish ultimately would reduce the market for all meat and poultry products.

There are no data to support the belief that federal inspection requirements are too onerous for small companies. In fact, thousands of small and very small meat and poultry plants in every single state operate successfully under the federal inspection process. There are currently 5,603 plants now under federal inspection, and 2,878 of those (51 percent) employ ten or fewer people. In addition, there are approximately 1,654 other plants that have between 10 and 50 employees.

While the federal inspection laws require that state inspection programs be equal to the federal program, based on reports by the USDA Office of Inspector General, plants subjected to state inspection may not be as clean and sanitary as federally inspected plants. In October 2006, the USDA Office of Inspector General published an audit of FSIS's oversight of state meat and poultry inspection programs that outlined how state inspection programs failed to meet sanitation standards. The report also found that FSIS was failing to hold states responsible for protecting public health by allowing meat plants in four states to continue to sell meat even after finding that the state programs were not meeting legal safety standards.

Although meat and poultry inspection laws require that state programs be equal to the federal program, USDA focuses its reviews of equivalence on state plans. So, while it is possible to have adequate inspection plans on paper, the USDA does not certify that each state inspected plant meets federal standards. The agency also does not return to these plants to determine that they are continuing to meet federal standards.

Mr. Chairman, you will be disturbed to learn that the USDA conducts a far more rigorous oversight of foreign plants that want to export meat to the U.S. than it does over state inspected plants. Before a plant in a foreign country can ship meat to the U.S., USDA must first determine that the foreign country's inspection program is ''equal to'' the U.S. program. Then, USDA must examine and certify as acceptable each individual plant that wants to ship meat or poultry to the U.S. There is no comparable requirement for state-inspected plants to be initially certified.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, rejected the state of Ohio's contention that the prohibition on interstate sale of state-inspected meat violated the Fifth and Tenth amendments to the U.S. Constitution. The court explained that the difference between federal, international and state inspection programs justified the limitations on the shipment of state inspected meat. They found that ''though the U.S. Department of Agriculture keeps an eye on state inspection programs, it keeps yet a closer eye on its own plants and on meat and poultry entering the country, and it is possible that a state program could deteriorate without the USDA's knowledge. This possibility provides a rational basis for Congress to restrict the interstate transport of state-inspected meat.''

Another important component of this issue to consider is that it would be extremely difficult for a state government to manage an effective recall of adulterated meat or poultry that has been shipped outside the state. The USDA and state governments do not possess mandatory recall authority, and recalls must be negotiated between the regulatory agency and the company. While a state meat inspection agency may direct a state-inspected plant