



April 29, 2013

The Honorable Don Gaetz  
President of the Florida Senate  
The Honorable Will Weatherford  
Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives  
The Capitol  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

Dear President Gaetz and Speaker Weatherford:

First, I would like to thank you for appointing select committees on the issue of gambling, and for your leadership in helping turn back the clock on gambling in our state by shutting down internet gambling cafés. This action on the part of the Legislature not only addressed a long overdue policy need, but also proved that the spread of gambling is not inevitable if the political will exists to draw a line in the sand.

But unfortunately, your leadership on this issue and the good work of the committees you formed to study it are now in peril. The reason: the experts chosen by your staff to conduct a study on gambling and the impact of additional gambling in Florida have irreconcilable conflicts of interest.

I write today on behalf of No Casinos with a simple request: cancel the contract with the Spectrum Gaming Group. Stop what will otherwise become \$400,000 taxpayer dollars spent on a study that no objective person who knows of its author will believe. Rescue the good idea of studying the impacts of gambling by having experts who have never worked for the industry conduct the study. At the very least, allow the Spectrum Gaming Group to continue with those portions of the scope that analyze the existing industry and regulatory regime, but have others who have no ax to grind study the social and economic costs of additional gambling.

The fact that Spectrum Gaming Group has consulted for most of the major players in the industry, including Genting, has now been widely reported. They also provide operations management consulting to the casino industry, and have a capital company that finances casinos and handles mergers and acquisitions.

(continued...)

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But it may come to a surprise to you and others that their addictions expert, Professor Howard Shaffer, has already made his views about the impact of expanded gambling on gambling addiction widely know. He states that more gambling opportunities can be added with little impact on addictions – and that gambling has important health benefits, such as being good for your heart and brain. His past work and conclusions are so bizarre; I have attached copies of the articles for your review.

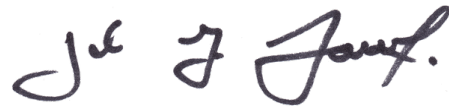
Florida taxpayers will not be surprised to learn that his views are likely shaped by the fact that a non-profit he does work for is bankrolled to the tune of millions of dollars by the casino gambling industry as part of their ongoing social-cost white-washing operation.

The fact that the gambling industry has paid apologists is nothing new or surprising. But allowing them to operate under the banner of the Florida Legislature and borrow its credibility to develop what will be a propaganda tool for the casino gambling industry is never what you, nor any other objective person ever intended.

You can rescue this process today by cancelling the contract with Spectrum Gaming Group or rewriting the scope to send those prospective portions of the study which seek to analyze the impacts of expanding gambling in Florida – including the social and economic costs – to experts who are not paid consultants for the gambling industry.

Thank you for your leadership, and for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John G. Sowinski". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

John G. Sowinski

CC           The Honorable Garrett Richter  
              The Honorable Robert Schenck

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**\$1 Million in Research Grants Awarded to Study Gambling Disorders**  
*Survey of College Gambling Habits One of Eight New Projects Taking Diverse  
Approaches to Scientific Exploration of the Issue*

*PR Newswire US*

*September 6, 2006 Wednesday 2:24 PM GMT*

WASHINGTON, Sept. 6 /PRNewswire/ -- Can animal behavior teach us about pathological gambling? What are the gambling patterns of college students? And how does brain function differ between at-risk and non-problem gamblers? Scientists may begin to develop the answers to these questions and more thanks to \$1 million in new research grants announced today by the Institute for Research on Pathological Gambling and Related Disorders. The grants, awarded on behalf of the National Center for Responsible Gaming (NCRG), bring the organization's total dollar amount awarded since 1996 to nearly \$10 million.

Recipients of the eight new grants were selected by the Institute's peer review panel, a group of distinguished researchers in the field of addictions appointed annually by the Institute to select the research grant awards. The panel reviewed 40 grant proposals submitted in response to three requests for applications. Of the eight grants awarded, three projects focus on neuroscience, three are incentive projects providing seed money to new investigators entering the field of pathological gambling research, and two are translational projects, supporting research that can be applied to prevention and intervention strategies.

"Supporting high quality scientific research is crucial to understanding the drivers behind not only gambling disorders, but all addictive disorders," said Phil Satre, chairman of the NCRG and former chairman and CEO of Harrah's Entertainment, Inc. "And with every grant awarded by the NCRG and the Institute, we are one step closer to improved methods of diagnosis, intervention, treatment and addiction prevention."

The following studies were awarded funding in their respective categories:

### Neuroscience Research on Gambling Disorders

- Donald W. Black, M.D. from the Carver College of Medicine at the University of Iowa received a \$172,500 grant to study how disordered gamblers differ from non-problem gamblers in executive function, attention, and impulsivity and how these deficits influence poor decision-making and the development of gambling disorders.
- Brett A. Clementz, Ph.D. from the University of Georgia was awarded \$167,088 to compare the brain activity of healthy gamblers and

disordered gamblers while engaging in behavioral tasks of decision-making.

- Jacob Linnet, Ph.D. from the Aarhus University Hospital in Denmark was awarded \$149,185 to investigate the role of the neurotransmitter dopamine in pathological gambling and its relationship with the distorted thinking characteristic of gamblers who continue to place wagers despite mounting losses and adverse consequences to their personal lives.

### Grants for Translational Research on Gambling and Gambling Disorders

- Edward Gottheil, M.D., Ph.D. from the University of Washington was awarded \$172,500 to explore whether the cues and motivations of disordered gamblers are always the same or if they vary between different types of gambling. The study will also consider the relationship between gambling and alcohol use.
- Anne Helen Skinstad, Ph.D. from the University of Iowa and the Prairielands Addiction Technology Transfer Center was awarded \$168,941 to conduct a national survey of gambling treatment professionals and develop a strategy for creating an evidence-based curriculum for delivery to gambling treatment professionals.

### Incentive Grants for New Investigators

- Catharine A. Winstanley, Ph.D. from University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center was awarded \$57,500 to investigate the viability of an animal model of gambling behavior that will provide insights into the neural and neurochemical basis of gambling disorders.
- Shelly B. Flagel, Ph.D. from the Molecular and Behavioral Neuroscience Institute at the University of Michigan received \$56,197 to experiment with an animal model for pathological gambling that addresses both the impulsivity and risk-taking dimensions of the disorder by studying rats selectively bred on the basis of a novelty-seeking trait.
- Anna E. Goudrian, Ph.D. from the University of Missouri was awarded \$57,436 to examine changes over time in gambling patterns, as well as the incidence of at-risk gambling and gambling problems, in a four-year longitudinal study of 2,400 college students.

According to Christine Reilly, executive director of the Institute, the goal for these new projects is to continue building the knowledge base about gambling disorders. "We are especially excited about the two animal studies which have the potential to

change the way research is done. This is truly uncharted territory for the field of gambling studies," Reilly said.

The Institute for Research on Pathological Gambling and Related Disorders was created in 2000 when the NCRG awarded a multi-million dollar contract to Harvard Medical School and transferred research grant making responsibilities to the Division on Addictions. Led by Dr. Howard Shaffer, associate professor of psychology in psychiatry at Harvard, the Institute's internal research program has conducted some of the most seminal investigations in the field of pathological gambling research including the first reliable prevalence estimates, the first national study of college gambling and the first study of the health risks of casino employees.

In addition to the management of the NCRG's grants program, the Institute also co-sponsors the annual NCRG Conference on Gambling and Addiction, which is a highlight of the NCRG's education initiatives. This year's conference will take place November 12-14 at the Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas. For more information about education and research initiatives by the National Center for Responsible Gaming or the Institute for Research on Pathological Gambling and Related Disorders call Christine Reilly at 701-306-8604 or visit <http://www.ncrg.org/> or <http://www.divisiononaddictions.org/institute>

The National Center for Responsible Gaming (NCRG) is the American Gaming Association's (AGA) affiliated charity. Founded in 1996 as a separate 501(c)3 charitable organization, the NCRG's mission is to support peer-reviewed, scientific research into pathological gambling and provide scientifically-based responsible gaming education and outreach programs to casino communities nationwide. For more information, visit <http://www.ncrg.org/>. NCRG funds provide money to researchers from around the globe to increase understanding of pathological gambling and find effective methods of treatment for the disorder. The funds are distributed through the Institute for Research on Pathological Gambling and Related Disorders, a program of the Division on Addictions at Cambridge Health Alliance, a teaching affiliate of Harvard Medical School. For more information, visit <http://www.divisiononaddictions.org/institute>

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*Web site: <http://www.ncrg.org/>*

*<http://www.divisiononaddictions.org/institute>*

*SOURCE National Center for Responsible Gaming*

*URL: <http://www.ncrg.org/press-room/press-release/archives/1-million-research-grants-awarded-study-gambling-disorders>*

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## Addiction Expert Says Small Doses of Gambling Might Help Heart

Timothy Boone  
The Sun Herald  
September 19, 2003

LAS VEGAS - A small amount of gambling may be good for people, especially older adults, just like a low level of drinking is good for the heart, an expert on gambling addiction said Thursday.

Dr. Howard Shaffer, director of the division of addictions at Harvard Medical School, said during the Global Gaming Expo that research suggests that gambling may be good for the heart and the brain.

"A low level of excitement, like you get from gambling, is good for the cardiovascular system," said Shaffer, who was a participant in G2E's signature series "American Voices: Gauging the Public Landscape on Gaming." "And cognitive behavior, like problem solving, is good for older adults."

Playing games is an important activity for adults and children, and Shaffer said for most adults, gambling can fill that niche.

Jan Jones - a former mayor of Las Vegas and now a senior vice president of communications for Harrah's Entertainment, which is set to become the world's largest casino company - said many people don't understand the entertainment of gambling.

"There are people who spend \$300 for a round of golf, but if you tell them you put \$50 in a slot machine, they look at you like you're absurd," she said.

"American Voices" was hosted by Frank Luntz, the Republican Party pollster who has conducted surveys for the American Gaming Association. Participating in the discussion along with Shaffer and Jones were David Creary, the acting chief executive officer of Aristocrat Technologies, and 13 tourists.

Luntz said comments from the tourists echoed much of his findings from polling for the AGA. Only one of the tourists said she would like to see a casino built within 15 minutes of her home, and the overwhelming majority said the blame for problem gambling falls on individuals, not on casinos.

Despite this widespread pass the public gives the gambling industry on problem gambling, Luntz said, casino companies face grave danger from class action lawsuits.

"Trial lawyers have got you in their sights," he said. "The next five or 10 years could be horrific."

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