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Washington State Outlaws Gambling And Speech

By Jason Martin

The state of Washington has a new law that makes gambling online a Class C Felony. Those who gamble online will now be charged with the same crime as someone who possesses child pornography. Live in Washington and like to play poker? Doing so is now a crime that will land you in jail for up to 5 years. You can also be fined \$10,000. Washington is setting a new precedence in the legal arena.

For years the federal government of the United States has tried to pass specific legislation to revise the Federal Wire Wagering Act. The most recent attempt is expected to pass the house, but it will most likely fail in the Senate. Washington State legislators decided to take matters into their own hands by passing this new law. Since there is no contradictory federal law, the Washington State law will face clear sailing.

The legislation does more than ban online gambling. It also bans talking about online gambling—quite the communist move by legislators. The legislation specifically outlaws the passing of any "gambling information." Furthermore, gambling information is defined as: "information as to wagers, betting odds and changes in betting odds shall be presumed to be intended for use in professional gambling." Technically, a blog that talks about a nationally televised sports game and mentions the "spread" would be in violation of the law and subject to penalty.

As expected, legislators are quick to point out that the law would not be used against individuals in this way. While that is all warm and fuzzy, the fact remains that the law is still on the books. Perhaps a better way to put it is that they don't currently plan to use it in this way—just wait until they need it. Also, if there was an ounce of truth to those statements, then how do you explain the official statement by Rick Day, the Executive Director for the Washington State Gambling Commission? When asked whether or not a site simply linking to an online gambling destination was in violation he said, "If the site also has a link to a gambling site, then to us that's no different." According to this statement, simply linking to a site can get you charged with a Class C Felony.

There is further cause for concern here, in regards to the way laws are written and the precedence they set. It's possible other states will look at Washington State's actions and decide to enact

something similar. Even if you are against gambling, are you also against censorship? Today it is gambling; tomorrow it is something you care about even more.

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Online Gambling – Keep Control

By Adel Awwad

Gambling can be addictive no matter where you are doing it – at a land casino, playing the lottery or at an online casino. Sometimes it is easier to get carried away at an online casino than at a regular land casino because you aren't actually handling money or chips, your money is all digitally displayed. Further, money can go fast when you are having fun.

As it is with all gambling, it is important to keep control when you are gambling at an online casino. By keeping track of your credits and cash and setting yourself honest limits that you adhere to, online gambling won't be a problem for you. Further, by setting limits on yourself for how much money you are willing to gamble and lose, you can keep control of your online gambling habits and make it a fun experience as it was meant to be. Gambling can be a lot of fun, a real adrenaline rush—especially when you are winning. There is an adrenaline rush when you are losing too, and that's when online gambling can get out of control and before you know it, you've spent much too much money, much more than you intended to gamble away. There are other precautions you can also take such as watching your drinking, not playing when you are tired and setting a time limit on each gambling session.

If you think you have a gambling problem, then please contact your local gambler's anonymous help group and get some help. It is so important not to let gambling run or ruin your life. "Just one more twenty/hundred/thousand dollars" is never something you should say more than you can afford to. Watch and keep track of what you are doing, how much money you are inputting into an online casino and keep the game and gambling experience fun for you and everyone.

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