



AN AMERICAN DECLARATION

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ON

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Government  
*and* Gambling

AN AMERICAN  
DECLARATION

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**AFTER FOUR DECADES OF UNFULFILLED PROMISES,** it is time for our government to end its partnership with organized gambling interests and to embrace a fundamentally different and higher vision of the path to American prosperity.

In short, after four decades of consistent failure, it is time for our government to get out of gambling and for gambling to get out of our government. We come together now to work for this change.

We will not be satisfied with small concessions, nor with measures that merely slow down the pace of government's gambling expansion. We hereby dedicate ourselves to a fundamental national reform—an America where no taxpayer dollar is used by government to lure citizens into gambling away their money and becoming slaves to debt; where no agency or entity of government depends on gambling to fund its activities; and where no legislature, whether in the name of economic development or raising revenue, passes laws to promote, sponsor, or enable gambling.

We realize that many of our current political leaders will oppose this reform. They will say that they can no longer resist the power of the gambling forces, that the spread of gambling is inevitable, and that the debate is over. We also realize that some of our fellow citizens, worn

down by the relentless encroachments of the government-gambling partnership, will say that our cause is hopeless.

It is anything but hopeless. We are a free people who can reform our government and change our ways.

This is a critical moment. How our generation responds to the reach and arrogance of the government-gambling power structure will largely determine the quality of our social life in the coming decades. Politically, economically, ethically, and spiritually, the stakes are extraordinarily high.

**POLITICALLY:** Government’s partnership with gambling fundamentally changes the compact between government and the governed. It pits government’s interests against the best interests of its people. For government to win, its citizens must lose.

**ECONOMICALLY:** No great nation has ever built prosperity on the foundations of personal debt, addiction, and the steady expansion of “businesses” that produce no new wealth. Relying on gambling as an economic development strategy is a sign of surrender and defeat on the part of leaders who have failed to lead.

**ETHICALLY:** A decent government does not finance its activities by playing its most vulnerable citizens for suckers, thus rendering the lives of millions expendable, exploitable, and unworthy of protection.

**SPIRITUALLY:** We mock the higher values that any good society depends on—honesty, mutual trust, self-discipline, sacrifice, concern for others, and a belief in a work ethic that connects effort and reward—when government tells its citizens every day that it is committed to providing “fun” instead of opportunity; that a rigged bet is the way

to achieve the American dream; and that spending one's hard-earned dollars on scratch tickets is a form of good citizenship.

This is America. Surely we can do better than this. Surely we must. The choice is not—it has never been—between tying our future to gambling and accepting economic decline. Government-sponsored gambling is itself a form of economic decline. The alternative is to muster the courage to chart a path to true prosperity. An America freed from the yoke of government-sponsored gambling would be an America once again on the move—an America with broader and more sustainable economic growth, more honesty in government, more social trust, and the rekindling of the optimism that has long been our defining national strength.

Therefore, with this Declaration, we set forth our reasons for seeking this reform and appeal to a candid nation to judge the truth of our argument.

## *Over the past four decades, how has government's partnership with gambling failed?*

- ★ It has transformed gambling from a private and local activity into the public voice of American government, such that ever-increasing appeals to gamble, and ever-expanding opportunities to gamble, now constitute the main ways that our government communicates with us on a daily basis.
- ★ It has broken its promise to remain a small component of our government and a small part of our society. In the brave new

world envisioned by this power structure—where every cell phone is a “casino in your pocket” and every bar, gas station, convenience store, computer, and home in the nation is a place to place a bet—the essential driving message from the American government to the American people is “All gambling, all good, all the time.”

- ★ It has fueled irresponsibility and non-accountability in government by imposing a giant excise tax on the citizenry that politicians never have to call a “tax.”
- ★ It has failed to deliver on its over-hyped promises to fund education, lower taxes, or pay for needed public services.
- ★ It has taken political power away from the people and handed it over to gambling lobbyists.
- ★ It has perpetrated a phony model of economic development—a model with a jobs multiplier effect of approximately zero, since, in this model, nothing of value is produced.
- ★ It has promulgated the very economic attitudes and practices—short-term is more important than sustainable, wealth can come from ever-growing debt, something can come from nothing, slickness trumps honesty—that led us into the debt bubble and the Great Recession of 2008 and beyond.
- ★ It has caused neighboring states to compete against each other in a race to the bottom.
- ★ It has taken dollars from the poor to fund programs for the better-off.
- ★ It has spread addiction into our population, using the new science of machine design to produce out-of-control behavior that,

according to scientists, closely resembles addictive behavior from cocaine.

- ★ It has spread debt and bankruptcy into our population.
- ★ It has led to serious gambling-related problems among young people.
- ★ It has extracted 80 percent or more of its profits from 10 percent of its “players,” with those high-volume “players” among our poorest and most vulnerable citizens.
- ★ It has contributed to broken families and child neglect and other social messes everywhere it goes, and has taken little or no responsibility to clean them up.
- ★ It has turned many law-abiding citizens into criminals who cheat, steal, and embezzle in order to continue to gamble.
- ★ It has arrogantly exempted itself from truth-in-advertising laws so that it can use taxpayer money to create and spread deceptive advertising.
- ★ It has corrupted our sense of community and undermined our faith that we’re all in this together.
- ★ It has deliberately changed the word “gambling” to “gaming” in order to make this often destructive activity sound as innocent as child’s play.
- ★ It has fueled cynicism about the motives of our government.
- ★ It has repudiated the value of thrift by creating mass incentives to turn potential savers into habitual bettors.

- ★ It has repudiated the virtue of “love your neighbor” and replaced it with a government endorsement of predatory practices, or preying on human weakness for gain.
- ★ It has withered our capacity as a people to confront forthrightly our reluctance to pay taxes for the public services we desire.
- ★ It has trampled on the ideal of “confirm thy soul in self-control.”
- ★ It has trampled on the ideal of “justice for all.”
- ★ It has broken faith with the wisdom and leaders of earlier generations who, seeing the failure of gambling in the past, amended state constitutions to ban gambling activities.
- ★ It has lied to us about how the government actually uses the money it gets from gambling.
- ★ It has lied to us by repeating again and again that luck—rather than work—is the key to the American dream.

**WE** therefore come together as American citizens, from diverse backgrounds, religious faiths, political convictions, and life circumstances, to declare our intention of making these United States free and independent of government-sponsored gambling, and once again able to resume their place as protectors of our security, leaders in building a shared prosperity, and examples to the world.

# Two Things *You Can Do* Right Now

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1. Sign your name to the Declaration using the attached postcard or go online at: **WWW.STOPPREDATORYGAMBLING.ORG**
2. Make a \$10 donation or volunteer 10 hours by enlisting your family, friends, and community to sign the American Declaration. **You can make your tax-deductible donation securely online at: WWW.STOPPREDATORYGAMBLING.ORG**

or by mailing it to:

## **SPG FOUNDATION**

100 Maryland Avenue NE, Room 310, Washington, DC 20002.

### **STOP PREDATORY GAMBLING FOUNDATION IS A 501C3**

non-profit based in Washington, D.C., made up of citizens from diverse backgrounds, religious faiths, political convictions, and life circumstances. Our mission is to place a national spotlight on why it is time for government to end its failed policy of predatory gambling.

We intend to achieve this goal by enlisting citizen leaders, circulating information in person and through the Internet, petitioning governments, and engaging the nation's religious, business, and media community on our behalf. We hope the initial gathering to sign the American Declaration will be followed by a series of gatherings embracing every part of the country. Please visit us at:

**WWW.STOPPREDATORYGAMBLING.ORG** to learn more.

*We give a special thanks to one of our partners, the Institute for American Values, for their help in bringing the Declaration to life and strengthening our power as citizens to reform our nation's government.*

I/We hereby sign An American Declaration on Government and Gambling because it is time for our government to end its partnership with organized gambling interests and to embrace a fundamentally different and higher vision of the path to American prosperity.

***To make a difference, I/we will do one or both of the actions below:***

- Donate \$10 by giving securely online at [www.stoppredatorygambling.org](http://www.stoppredatorygambling.org), or by mailing it to: SPG Foundation, 100 Maryland Avenue NE, Room 310, Washington, DC 20002. (Donations are tax-deductible.)
- Volunteer 10 hours by enlisting my family, friends, and community to sign the American Declaration.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL (Please Include): \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

I/We hereby sign An American Declaration on Government and Gambling because it is time for our government to end its partnership with organized gambling interests and to embrace a fundamentally different and higher vision of the path to American prosperity.

SIGN HERE: \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE SIGN HERE: \_\_\_\_\_

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### **INVITE A FRIEND TO SIGN**

There are three easy ways you can invite your friends or family to sign An American Declaration: (1) Email us at [mail@stoppredatorygambling.org](mailto:mail@stoppredatorygambling.org), (2) Call us at 202.567.6996, or (3) Complete and return the form below:

FRIEND'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

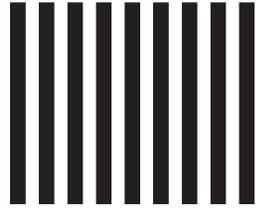
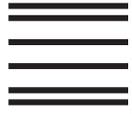
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_



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**[www.stoppredatorygambling.org](http://www.stoppredatorygambling.org)**