



# Washington State Council on Problem Gambling

## NEWS BRIEF

### BEST CHANCE EVER FOR COMPREHENSIVE PROBLEM GAMBLING PROGRAM IN WASHINGTON

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The need for a comprehensive state program to address problem gambling has never been greater. According to the Washington State Gambling Commission, gambling activity rose 16 percent in the past fiscal year and has tripled since 1996. The Washington State Council on Problem Gambling (WSCPG) and our many supporters have been at the forefront in developing strong education and awareness programs to meet the need for public education and prevention. These are crucial efforts, but we know there is no substitute for a comprehensive treatment program in our state.

The Governor's Office, State Legislators, government agencies, gaming industry members, and nonprofit organizations such as the Washington State Council on Problem Gambling are all working to develop a comprehensive program to address problem gambling in Washington State. During this interim, Governor Locke convened a work group of advisors drawn from treatment professionals, recovering gamblers representing Gamblers Anonymous, law enforcement, state agencies, gaming industry representatives, and other stakeholders. The Washington State Council on Problem Gambling served on this panel.

In 2002, the Legislature authorized a pilot program of state-funded, subsidized treatment for problem gamblers and family members. The Washington State Council on Problem Gambling set up and administered this pilot program under contract to the Washington State Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse. The program was a great success. Two-thirds of the clients showed significant improvements, fully one-third abstained from gambling, and another third greatly reduced their gambling. Clients reduced their financial problems, illegal behaviors, and conflicts. Based on what we learned in that one-year program, WSCPG proposed the outline of a comprehensive program of prevention, professional training, public education, and treatment that forms the core of the Governor's proposed legislation.

Several bills will likely be proposed during the upcoming legislative session. While each will vary in one way or another, the ultimate goal is to successfully enact a comprehensive, fully funded, permanent problem gambling program to address education and awareness, training, and treatment for problem gamblers and their families in Washington State.

In this issue of WSCPG *News Brief*, we share highlights of current efforts.

**WSCPG**

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*All parties, including the Governor, should be commended for taking these important steps toward addressing this long-neglected issue. Governor-sponsored legislation articulating this comprehensive program to address problem gambling is being introduced in this legislative session with the enthusiastic support of the Washington State Council on Problem Gambling.*

## GOVERNOR'S OFFICE RECOMMENDATIONS

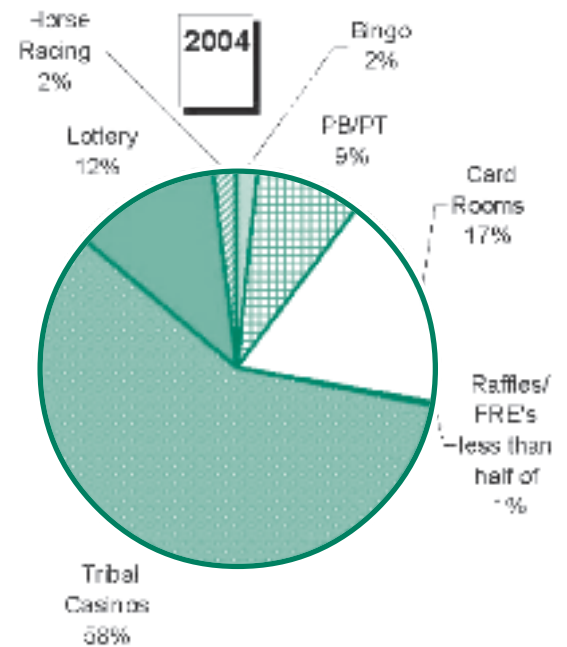
Members of the gambling industry gathered, at the request of the Governor, to discuss and agree upon a mutually acceptable funding mechanism to address the issue of problem gambling. Seated at the table, among others, were representatives from commercial gambling, charities, the Horse Racing Commission, Washington's Lottery, and the Washington State Council on Problem Gambling (WSCPG President Richard Lobel and Board Member Dr. Charles Maurer). Tribal representatives elected to discuss this issue with Governor's staff directly.

The issues that dominated the discussions between the stakeholders were the components of a comprehensive program to address problem gambling and the fair allocation of the costs of that program. Industry representatives quickly came to consensus on support for a model put forward by the Washington State Council on Problem Gambling. This model included professional and industry training, heightened public awareness, re-start of the 2002/2003 treatment program, and a "fair-share" allocation formula to support the overall program. This "fair-share" funding formula is based on the Gambling Commission's chart, at right, projecting proportional gambling activities for industry participants.

The Governor's recommendation for funding starts at \$1,500,000 for the first year and increases to \$2,000,000 the following year.

The Tribes, as sovereign governments, could support the program through voluntary

contributions and government-to-government agreements with the state. Tribes have already pledged a total of \$452,000 and many have been long-time supporters of the WSCPG, so it seems likely they will join this collaborative effort.



Bingo	27.1
PB/PT	132.0
Card Rooms	268.4
Raffles/FRE's	4.3
Tribal Casinos*	898.0
Lottery	186.0
Horse Racing	28.2

**Total \$1.534 B**

*GAMBLING COMMISSION ACTIVITY CHART*

# LEGISLATIVE ALERT—YOUR HELP IS NEEDED!

## We need your help to enact a Comprehensive Problem Gambling Program in Washington State.

We need your help to testify, participate in interviews, and tell your story.

If you have had a gambling problem or know someone who has; if you have a family member with a gambling problem; if you are a treatment provider, a member of the clergy, or have any other experience working with problem gamblers, and you are able to tell your story, please contact us. We understand that many individuals who face this problem cannot go public, but some can. For those who cannot, there are often ways to tell your story anonymously. If you can help in any way, please contact WSCPG Executive Director, Gary Hanson by calling 1-253-857-3201 or by e-mail: [gary@wscpg.org](mailto:gary@wscpg.org).

We need your help contacting, phoning, writing, and sending e-mails to legislators.

Last year, many concerned individuals contacted legislators in support of the problem gambling bill. This effort was noticed and it was effective! Legislators need to know that the citizens of Washington support a Problem Gambling Program. By the beginning of the Legislative Session on January 11, 2005, the WSCPG website ([www.wscpg.org](http://www.wscpg.org)) will have links and instructions about how to contact your representatives and what to say.

## With your help, we can enact a problem gambling program in 2005!

### Inter-Agency Agreement

The Washington State Gambling Commission, Washington's Lottery, the Washington Horse Racing Commission, and the State of Washington Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) have entered into a joint agreement to provide more than \$200,000 in funding for support services for problem gamblers, which will be administered through the DSHS Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (DASA). The Gambling Commission began the discussions and was joined by the other agencies. The Washington State Council

on Problem Gambling (WSCPG) participated in the discussions.

The final agreement provides for each agency to support public awareness, Helpline services, and training programs to address Problem Gambling. Initially, the Gambling Commission is providing the majority of the funds, about \$150,000, which has been transferred to DASA. Currently, WSCPG is working with DASA to set up and develop this new program.

*As the Washington State Legislature convenes in January 2005, the Washington State Council on Problem Gambling will be in Olympia working hard to ensure that a comprehensive Problem Gambling Program passes this year. We need your help. Please visit the WSCPG website [www.wscpg.org](http://www.wscpg.org) for more information, links, and easy steps to contact your representative.*

## LEGISLATIVE VIEWPOINT

**T**his Fall, WSCPG Board President Richard Lobel and Executive Director Gary Hanson had a chance to discuss prospects for a Comprehensive Problem Gambling Program in Washington with Senator Jim Honeyford, Senator Margarita Prentice, and Representative Steve Conway.

**WSCPG:** *Why do you think it has taken until now for the state to tackle the question of a permanent problem gambling program?*

**Prentice:** The tragedy of addictive gambling is almost too painful to discuss. No

one has wanted to take responsibility for it. As Legislators, we have tried to deal with this. No excuses for not passing something, but it is a painful issue.

**Honeyford:** The Legislature is probably sold on the need. The hang-up is on how to be equitable. If everyone pays their fair share, I am sure that a bill will have an easy time passing.

**WSCPG:** *Why is now the right time?*

**Honeyford:** If you look at the recent history of gambling, with net win rising from \$500 million to more than \$1.3 billion in just a few short years, there has to be an attendant increase in problem gambling. That is why now is the time to get a bill passed.

**WSCPG:** *Can you comment on the role that gaming establishments play in addressing the issue of problem gambling?*

**Prentice:** Well, if anyone should know who the problem gamblers are, it's the dealers and the managers in the establishments where these compulsive gamblers play. They have to take the extra step to get these people help. There is more to a new problem gambling policy than just collecting money from the gaming establishments to pay for treatment.

**WSCPG:** *What do you think about the proposed funding level of \$1.5 million the first year and \$2 million the second year?*

**Honeyford:** I kind of see \$3 million as a target. I believe you go for the best first. We can couple our spending to the flexibility to scale back if the spending level proves unnecessary.

**WSCPG:** *What is your opinion about the prospect for passing a Comprehensive Problem Gambling bill this session?*

**Conway:** With the Senate leadership, Democratic and Republican, supporting Problem Gambling efforts, the stars are in alignment this year. The House demonstrated its willingness last year and the Senate has shown it is willing next year. We will do something! We will pass a bill! The time is right for it!

**Honeyford:** As long as it's a broad bill, I think you can get all kinds of support. A narrow bill will not have such smooth sailing.

**Prentice:** Let's get something through—that's my main goal. We can't avoid this issue.



*WSCPG Board President Richard Lobel meets with Senator Jim Honeyford.*



*Senator Margarita Prentice discusses goals for a Comprehensive Problem Gambling Program in Washington with WSCPG Executive Director Gary Hanson*

## Legislative Update

This past year, there seemed to be some momentum to bring back a state-funded treatment program that had lapsed. But that was contingent on passage of House Bill 2776, which would have directed the state Lottery and the Gambling Commission to transfer \$500,000 into a treatment account designed to provide a year's worth of treatment for Problem Gamblers who can't afford it on their own. It also would have created a task force to find a permanent source to fund the program. The main difficulty that kept the bill from passing last year was identifying an ongoing and equitable source of funding. While the Washington State Council on

Problem Gambling was disappointed that legislation did not pass, the session was not a failure. This effort set the stage for a negotiated solution next session.

This year, several legislators who have worked on Problem Gambling issues—House Commerce and Labor Committee Chair Steve Conway, Representative Alex Wood, Senator Margarita Prentice, and Senator Jim Honeyford—have committed to enacting legislation that will provide a comprehensive program that will be there when problem gamblers and their families in Washington State need it.



*WSCPG Executive Director and Representative Steve Conway met to review efforts to support Problem Gambling legislation. Conway believes this year's leadership in the House and Senate are ready to work to pass legislation this session. "We will pass a bill," Conway said. "The time is right for it!"*

## SUPPORT THE COUNCIL

**Your contribution makes a difference!**

**E**very time you make a contribution to support the Washington State Council on Problem Gambling, you are helping to support the Council's mission of *increasing public awareness of the condition of problem gambling and increasing the availability of services for problem gamblers and their families.*

Your generous contribution helps support:

- 24-hour toll-free Problem Gambling Helpline (1-800-547-6133)
- Public Education/Awareness Programs
- Gaming Industry Employee Orientation and Training Programs
- Training Workshops and Certification Programs for Treatment Providers
- Advocacy
- Referral Services

The WSCPG accepts all contributions, including:

- outright gifts
- pledge commitments (monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually)
- honorary/memorial gifts
- unrestricted gifts
- appreciated securities
- matching gifts
- planned gifts such as charitable trusts and bequests

For further information about any of these giving opportunities, please contact Gary Hanson, Executive Director, at 253-857-3201 or your financial advisor. Contributions may be fully tax-deductible.

# FOUNDATION FOR FUNDING—THE WSCPG PROPOSAL

## Comprehensive Problem Gambling Program General Description and Costs

The Washington State Council on Problem Gambling has developed a plan for a Comprehensive Program to address Problem Gambling in Washington State. This plan was based on our experience operating the statewide Helpline, conducting public awareness and youth education, and administering the state pilot Problem Gambling Treatment Program. Also, we checked with our sister state councils and our many other professional contacts around the nation to ensure that our plan was comparable to the best Problem Gambling programs in other states.

Enacting this program will save the state money. Research clearly indicates that such a comprehensive program can keep the state's

rate of Problem and Pathological Gambling stable. In fact, such programs may even reduce the rate of Problem Gambling—getting Problem Gamblers back to work as tax-paying citizens.

The WSCPG plan, which we have submitted to the legislature and the Governor's Office, includes all the basic components necessary for a good Problem Gambling Program. These basic components include Treatment, Public and Youth Awareness, Helpline Services, and Prevention. WSCPG believes that a good, basic program should initially be funded at \$1.5 million per year. The program should include \$1,000,000 for treatment and \$500,000 for prevention, public awareness, Helpline services, and professional training.

*Enacting a comprehensive Problem Gambling program will save the state money. Such programs may stabilize or even reduce the rate of Problem Gambling—getting Problem Gamblers back to work as tax-paying citizens.*

### WASHINGTON STATE COUNCIL ON PROBLEM GAMBLING PROPOSAL

\$1,000,000	Treatment Services
\$ 100,000	Helpline Services
\$ 50,000	Training
\$ 150,000	Prevention and Outreach
\$ 150,000	Public Awareness and Research
\$ 50,000	Administration
\$1,500,000	TOTAL

## Why Not More?

Some have asked why the WSCPG proposal does not request more than \$1,500,000. There are two main reasons for the funding levels.

The first reason is that the WSCPG based its request on realistic expectations based on prior experience and the experience of other states. The estimate of the funding needed for treatment is based on our experience with the pilot treatment program in 2002-03. In addition, we checked on treatment programs in other states and found that the experience of Washington State was similar to that of other states. We determined funding for Helpline Services, Training, Prevention, Public Awareness, and other issues in the same way.

The second reason is the practical reason of what can be achieved. Broad-based support from the Legislature, the Governor’s Office, and the gambling industry – those who will be paying for the program – is necessary for the program to pass. Requesting too much money will ensure that the program will not be implemented.

WSCPG supports initiating a program at about \$1.5 million, operating the program for a couple of years, assessing any additional need based on the results of the program, and then requesting any increase in funding that might be needed.

## Social Costs and Savings

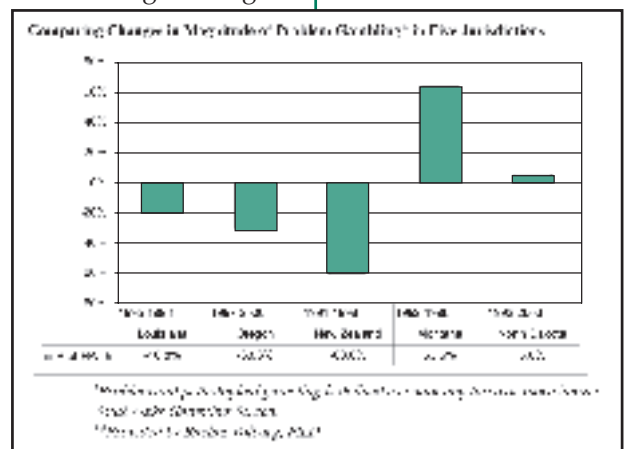
A comprehensive Problem Gambling program will save the state money. The Congressionally mandated *Gambling Impact Study Commission* found that every Pathological Gambler costs society at least \$10,000. Much of this cost is borne by taxpayers in the form of legal costs, assisting broken families and dependent children, and other social services. Under the pilot treatment program in Washington State, Problem Gamblers were successfully treated for only \$1,600, including one-time costs such as provider training and program set-up. These Problem Gamblers were able to get into recovery, keep their families together, get jobs, and begin repaying their debts. They went from being tax-burdens to taxpayers.

More importantly, Problem Gambling programs can keep Problem Gambling from increasing. In fact, evidence suggests that with the proper programs, the rate of Problem Gambling can be reduced. Studies comparing the rates of Problem Gambling have found

that states and nations with good, comprehensive programs addressing Problem Gambling have seen a reduction in rates.

In the graph, those with comprehensive programs—Louisiana, Oregon, and New Zealand—reduced their Problem gambling rates. Those with no programs—Montana and North Dakota—saw increased rates.

If a comprehensive program to address Problem Gambling—including Public and Youth Awareness, Helpline Services, Professional Training, and Treatment—were fully funded, Washington State would certainly see reductions also.



## ABOUT THE WASHINGTON STATE COUNCIL ON PROBLEM GAMBLING

The Washington State Council on Problem Gambling (WSCPG) is a 501(c) (3) charity, founded in 1991. From the beginning, the WSCPG has maintained a position of neutrality on gambling, recognizing that most people who gamble do so for recreation and suffer no serious problems. However, for some, gambling becomes a serious addiction, devastating to the individual and the family. The WSCPG works to help these individuals.

## THANK YOU TO CONTRIBUTORS

The Washington State Council on Problem Gambling extends its thanks to the Puyallup Indian Tribe for its donation of \$100,000 to support the work of the WSCPG. In addition to the \$100,000 donation from the Puyallup Tribe, WSCPG received many other contributions in 2004. Contributors to the WSCPG or its projects are listed below in order of their contribution.

THE PUYALLUP TRIBE  
THE MUCKLESHOOT TRIBE  
THE CHEHALIS TRIBE & LUCKY EAGLE CASINO  
PLAYERS CASINO  
THE TULALIP TRIBE  
THE RECREATIONAL GAMING ASSOCIATION  
THE WASHINGTON INDIAN GAMING ASSOCIATION  
IRON HORSE CASINO  
INTERNATIONAL GAMING TECHNOLOGY (IGT)  
THE UPPER SKAGIT TRIBE  
P.J. POCKETS CASINO  
SEVEN CEDARS CASINO (JAMESTOWN S'KLALLAM TRIBE)  
NEW PHOENIX AND LAST FRONTIER CASINOS  
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF SW WASHINGTON (LACENTER CASINOS)  
EVERGREEN ENTERTAINMENT CORPORATION (GRAND CENTRAL CASINOS)  
LAKE BOWL, INC. (PAPA'S CASINO)

### MISSION STATEMENT

*The Washington State Council on Problem Gambling is dedicated to increasing public awareness of the condition of problem gambling and increasing the availability of services for problem gamblers and their families. The Council is neither for nor against gambling.*



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## For more Information

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