

JASA

Justice Alliance of South Africa

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27 OCTOBER 2009 WRITTEN SUBMISSION
17 NOVEMBER 2009 ORAL SUBMISSION

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF PARLIAMENT TRADE AND INDUSTRY PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE

HEARINGS REVIEWING

NATIONAL GAMBLING LEGISLATION

SUBMISSION

PRESENTED BY

JUSTICE ALLIANCE OF SOUTH AFRICA

(Kindly Note that JASA would like to make an ORAL submission to the Committee at the Public Hearings)

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Executive Board

Grant Gunston (Chairman), Stephen van Rhyn (Vice-Chairman), Tendai Musikavanhu, Linda-Jane Tippoo
Quinton George, Nigel Desmond, John Smyth

SUBMISSION

JASA is a coalition of churches and individuals committed to upholding Judeo-Christian values in South African society. As such we share the fears and concerns of so many of the Portfolio Committee members as evidenced for example in the Minutes of 8 August 2007.

A. JASA is strongly opposed to legalizing and thus condoning and encouraging another form of gambling (on-line) in our society which will rapidly increase as more people have access to home computers online. Our major concerns may be summarised as follows:

(a) In reality it will be impossible to ensure children do not gamble in this manner particularly as credit cards become more widely used by parents. The real danger is that children will have their appetites whetted to what can so easily become an addiction.

(b) We share the view that gambling is a moral issue and has been seen to destroy lives.

(c) We agree with the Report of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in Britain (Annexure 1) that the concept of promoting “responsible gambling” is disingenuous. According to the report in the Weekly Telegraph (August 21 2007) the Royal College voiced concern about the thrust of the government’s gambling policies, in particular the “disingenuous” notion of promoting “responsible gambling”. They went on to call on “ministers to give overriding attention to producing tougher regulations on the burgeoning online gambling industry.” The newspaper reported that a recent survey showed that 8.4 per

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cent of people have gambled online in the past month, up from 7.4 per cent last year.

(d) Online gambling will develop into a social evil which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

B. JASA is also concerned about the integrity and independence of the NRG (National Responsible Gambling Programme) which is supervised by the South African Responsible Gambling Trust, a body which has no less than 4 representatives from the gambling industry as Trustees. We ask: **How can persons motivated by, and employed to make profits out of gambling, be suitable persons to make impartial judgements about the dangers of gambling?** The conflict of interest is obvious.

The UK have run into exactly the same problem with their analogous body – “Responsibility in Gambling Trust”. We attach (Annexure 2) a Submission by the Royal College of Psychiatrists (England) to the UK Gambling Commission dated January 2006. This report exposes the dangers of relying for advice or even statistics on a body which is “industry-driven” but dressed up with an attractive title to suggest it is primarily concerned for the consumer. A body with any links to commercial gambling in our view cannot give impartial advice to Parliament.

JASA fears that the RGT schools programme in SA (as detailed on their website – www.responsiblegambling.co.za -) may in reality be introducing children to gambling at a very young and impressionable age.

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Annexures:

1. Report in Weekly Telegraph 21 Aug 2007 re Internet Gambling Adverts and other matters
2. Royal College of Psychiatrists (UK) Submission to Gambling Commission: “Statement of Principles on Licensing and Regulation” January 2006 (10 pages). Available at www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/Gambling_submission_050307.pdf

John J Smyth QC

Honorary Director of JASA

27 October 2009

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Upholding Justice in the Public Square

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