



November 17, 2016

ALAN WILSON
ATTORNEY GENERAL

The Honorable Vice President-Elect Pence c/o Presidential Transition Team
1717 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Vice President-Elect Mike Pence and the Trump transition team,

As the states' top law enforcement officers, we the undersigned Attorneys General, send this letter to express our deep concern over the current interpretation of the Wire Act and to request your help in restoring the Wire Act's protections.

Since 1961, the Wire Act, 18 U.S.C. §1084, has prohibited all gambling involving interstate wire transmissions. In the dark of night on Christmas 2011, the Obama administration overruled 50 years of practice and precedent when a Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of Legal Counsel opinion claimed the Wire Act only applied to sports betting, and not to other types of online gambling. Dismantling the Wire Act undermined state online gambling prohibitions. Without a federal prohibition, DOJ opened the door to expansive Internet gambling and exposed states to the significant negative impacts that often accompany online gambling.

The risks to our citizens are real and extensive. The ability for youth to access online gambling sites presents a significant risk to teens, a risk more easily mitigated at traditional brick-and-mortar gambling establishments. A study of Connecticut youth and gambling showed that 20.5% of adolescent gamblers reported gambling online. What's more, Columbia University's Medical Center estimates that teenagers make up half of the 16 million people in the U.S. with gambling addictions. Such addictions often lead to divorce, domestic violence, child abuse or neglect, increased crime, and suicide, in both youth and adults.

Communities also face the significant negative impacts that accompany Internet gambling. The anonymity of the Internet offers vast opportunities for criminal activity, terrorist financing, and money laundering through online gaming sites. Online gamblers are vulnerable to fraud and identity theft, and are often left with little recourse when scammed. Some internet gambling sites have been found to use forced labor to farm currency. An Internet gambler has no means of verifying the activities of a site and could unknowingly be funding cybercriminal operations or supporting serious human rights violations. Even the sites themselves are vulnerable to hacking, which may expose a player's personal and financial information.

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Anonymity is the Internet's greatest weapon and the federal government has the resources and oversight necessary to truly address the dangers of online gambling and protect the American people.

State officials have worked diligently to lobby Congress to overturn the DOJ interpretation, but they need your help. The next administration, led by President-elect Donald Trump, has an opportunity to undo the dangerous precedent set by the Obama Administration. The 2011 DOJ opinion ignored the rule of law, reversed DOJ's previous longstanding interpretations, and allowed arbitrary decisions of individual government officials to create law. Instead, any changes to the Wire Act and its provisions should have been given full and fair debate before the Congress, with whom the American people have vested the power to create the laws of the land.

By returning to the Wire Act's original interpretation, the Trump Administration will seize an opportunity to restore the rule of law and reinstate vital protections for our communities.

We appreciate your consideration of this request.

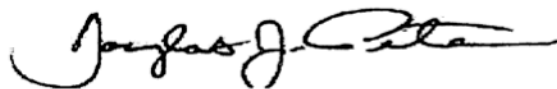
Sincerely,



Jeff Landry
Louisiana Attorney General



Bill Schuette
Michigan Attorney General



Douglas J. Peterson
Nebraska Attorney General



Adam Paul Laxalt
Nevada Attorney General



Wayne Stenehjem
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