

OCT 17 2012

Senator Bob Runciman
Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs
c/o Shaila Anwar
Committee Clerk
anwats@sen.parl.gc.ca

Dear Senator Runciman:

With respect to the request for written response in support of An Act to amend the Criminal Code (sports betting) Bill C-290, you will note a letter was sent to the Minister of Justice & Attorney General of Canada indicating the position of the Province of Manitoba to support the proposed changes. As of today, the position on this matter has not changed.

If you have any other questions please contact Kerry Wolfe, Senior Executive Director Strategic Gaming and Liquor Development at (kerry.wolfe@mlc.mb.ca).

Yours sincerely,



Winston Hodgins
Chief Executive Officer

c: Kerry Wolfe, Senior Executive Director

Attachment





MINISTER
RESPONSIBLE FOR LOTTERIES

Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba, CANADA
R3C 0V8

The Honourable Robert Douglas Nicholson, P.C., Q.C.
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
284 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H8

FEB 06 2012

Dear Minister Nicholson:

As the Minister Responsible for Lotteries in the Province of Manitoba, I am writing in support of the deletion of section 207(4)(b) of the Criminal Code of Canada, which reads as follows:

Definition of "lottery scheme"

(4) In this section, "lottery scheme" means a game or any proposal, scheme, plan, means device, contrivance or operation described in any of paragraphs 206(1)(a) to (g), whether or not it involves betting, pool selling or a pool system of betting other than

...

(b) bookmaking, pool selling or the making or recording of bets, including bets made through the agency of a pool or pari-mutuel system on any race or fight, or on a single sport event or athletic contest...

The reason for this request is two fold: (1) as time has passed since section 207(4)(b) was enacted, wagering on single sporting events has become pervasive through various illegal online gaming websites; and (2) related to the above, significant revenues are being lost by our Province which could be used for important Provincial programs.

With respect to point (1) above, the intention of enacting this provision in the Criminal Code was premised on single sport events being vulnerable to being "fixed" or interfered with, to produce favourable outcomes on wagers. While this appears to have had an initial purpose, as a result of the evolution of gaming and technology, particularly the introduction of online gaming, the restriction is no longer effective. Many of these illegal websites operate with little or no regulatory oversight which presents the risk of both misconduct and compromised integrity.

Legalization and regulation would serve to provide Canadians interested in this form of gaming with more confidence. Regulation would include monitoring of betting patterns which could be a useful tool in evaluating any mischief arising from single event sports wagers.

As you are aware, Manitoba Lotteries Corporation ("MLC") is the Crown Corporation agent responsible for the conduct and management of gaming in our Province. As a leader in Responsible Gaming initiatives, MLC has always advocated with success the responsible use of its gaming products. In the event that it was able to extend its conduct and management authority to single sport event wagers, MLC would bring its same diligence.

As to point (2) above, the potential economic benefits would appear to be highly significant. For context, we note the Canadian Gaming Association cites sports wagering as the single most popular form of gaming for Canadians. Wagering of this nature is estimated to exceed \$10 billion annually, with only \$450 million of that wagered through current legally regulated provincial sports lottery products.

Respectfully, in advancing our request, it is our position that the prohibition of wagers on single sport events is no longer necessary as it fails to deter Canadians, to a satisfactory extent, from engaging in this illegal form of gaming. Elimination of the restriction will allow the Province of Manitoba, through MLC, to engage in the necessary regulation of single sport event wagers while realizing consequential economic benefits.

We thank you for considering our comments. If you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:

Steve Ashton
Minister