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**Follow up Recommendations to
The Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs
October 23, 2012**

Prepared by:

The Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre
The Responsible Gambling Council

Regarding:

Bill C290 – An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (Sports Betting)

The Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs met on Wednesday, October 17, 2012 to give consideration to Bill C-290. Bill C-290 repeals paragraph 207(4)(b) of the *Criminal Code* to make it lawful for the government of a province, or a person or entity licensed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council of that province, to conduct and manage a lottery scheme in the province that involves betting on a race or fight or on a single sport event or athletic contest.

Witnesses Jon Kelly, Chief Executive Officer, Responsible Gambling Council (RGC), Ms. Lynda Hessey, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre (OPGRC); and Mr. Gary O'Connor, Chief Executive Officer of the Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre (OPGRC) presented to the Senate Committee their concerns/recommendations regarding Bill C-290. We, the witnesses encouraged the Senate, while examining this bill and making recommendations for regulation to accompany it, that governments consider enhancing resources to problem gambling research, prevention, awareness and treatment.

Senator McIntyre confirmed that the witnesses were inviting the Senate to play a role in the management of single sports betting and any form of gambling product, including player safeguards. Senator McIntyre and the Deputy Chair requested the witnesses provide recommendations for safeguards that could be built into online sports betting.

The following are the comments on player safeguards we see as important safeguards to implement in the sports betting domain.

Inclusion of:

1. A well communicated, self-ban/self-exclusion process which is simply designed and readily available
2. A self-limit capability where players can exclude themselves for specific periods of time
3. Well trained customer service staff who know how to respond appropriately to customers who disclose a gambling problem as well as provide the customer with correct information about gambling misconceptions (e.g., chances of winning, chasing losses, superstitions).
4. A player analytics program that tracks play behavior (e.g., time and money expenditure) and flags players who may have a problem
5. A clear, escalating process in place to provide feedback to players who display signs of a gambling problem and to offer information, support and referral
6. A multi-venue lay language customer awareness strategy that ensures patrons understand
 - How the games work
 - The realistic chances of winning and losing
 - Information about how to avoid a gambling problem (i.e., responsible gambling strategies)
 - Signs that you or someone you know has a gambling problem
 - Where help for problem gambling is available (self-help materials, contact information for Ontario-wide problem gambling help centres)
7. User-friendly player managed tools including limits setting and account summaries
8. Prominently displayed intermittent play safety messages
9. A prohibition of credit and inter-player transfer of funds (i.e. loans)

The RGC and OPGRC recognize that if live betting during play is permitted there are likely to be additional safeguards that would apply but RGC and OPGRC have not had the opportunity to assess the usefulness of any of these and would like to assess them more closely before recommending safeguards.

Senator Baker further requested the RGC and OPGRC forward to the Senate Committee a suggested amendment to the bill to address our concerns. While we are not requesting an amendment to the bill the addition of the following clause would help anchor responsible gambling best practices.

“That all single event sports betting operators must ensure adherence to responsible gambling best practices”.

For more information please contact:

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