



## RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING COUNCIL

### A Brief for the Senate of Canada

**Prepared by:**

The Responsible Gambling Council of Canada

**Regarding:**

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

The Responsible Gambling Council appreciates the opportunity to speak to your considerations around Bill C290 regarding single event sports betting.

For those not familiar with this organization, the Council is a non-profit originally established over 30 years ago by people with firsthand experience of gambling problems. The RGC today is a prevention organization which brings together all perspectives, including gamblers who have had problems and gaming providers in the search for ways to reduce the risk that anyone will experience a gambling problem.

Problem gambling prevention, to be effective, must be double sided. On the one hand it is very important to ensure that people who gamble are well informed about what is involved, the risks, the realistic chances of winning and losing, signs of a problem and where to get help if you need it. The Council operates a range of prevention programs in schools, colleges and universities as well as social marketing campaigns to address this side of the prevention picture.

We are also well aware that you cannot reduce problem gambling through awareness/education alone. It is equally important to build safeguards into gaming products and the ways those products are delivered. We therefore devote considerable energy to the investigation of 'best practices' in the way gaming products are designed and delivered.

When discussing the legalization of single event sports betting, it is important to consider the context, i.e. the large scale transformation in gambling we are currently witnessing worldwide.

Not too many years ago when someone said the word 'gambling' it conjured up images of casinos, race tracks and bingos and, perhaps, lotteries. While venue based gaming is here to stay, there is no doubt that technological changes are having a pervasive influence in both land based and on-line gambling.

We can already see the explosion of gaming products and formats. Companies like Facebook and Zinga, for example are offering betting options embedded in their suite of social games. Earlier this year the London-listed bwin.party, the biggest online gambling company, said it was investing £32million into social gaming. The lines between social games and gaming are being blurred.

The possibilities offered by new technologies are constrained only by the imagination and, of course, the regulators. This will be the reality of the world of sports betting as well as most other forms of gambling.

For about two decades we have been witnessing gambling introduction which was largely driven by casinos and electronic gaming machines. Now we are in an era of diversification and integration; an era in which conversations related to gambling management are displacing conversations about gambling prohibition.

These developments modify the gambling landscape in three significant ways. They mean instant and unlimited access to gambling. They represent a shift toward much younger players. And, they will bring more participants into the gambling market. As a result there will be increased risk of gambling problems. It is therefore essential that risk reduction/risk mitigation programs be strengthened and modernized to address these new challenges and increased risks.

Canada has, by and large, developed a good gambling safety net with investments in community based programs (approx. \$82M in 2010/2011) as well as industry based programs (approx. \$35M in 2010/2011) usually labeled responsible gambling programs. But, these programs are based on a gaming model that is largely venue based, slot machine oriented and access controlled. It is essential that the prevention programs and the problem gambling safety net reflect the future and not just the past.

On the game and game delivery side it will be essential that public sector gaming corporations and regulators play an even stronger role in defining the rules of the game and in setting clear limits for what is acceptable and not acceptable.

There will be an increasing array of gambling options in the future and that array will be somewhat unpredictable, it will be important to build 'gambling literacy' in the broader public. It will be particularly important to make sure young people are prepared for the growing range of gambling enticements and opportunities. Gambling literacy means ensuring that people who gamble understand how gambling works, the realistic chances of winning and losing, how to avoid a gambling problem, signs of a problem and where to get help if you need it.

As gaming grows it is very important that the prevention/awareness side of the equation be enhanced and diversified its content and strategies. The Senate of Canada can play a very important role in this by making it clear that single event sports betting and any form of gambling product needs careful and scrupulous management including the careful planning and incorporation of player safeguards.



**RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING COUNCIL**

## **Biography**

### **Dr. Jon Kelly Chief Executive Officer Responsible Gambling Council of Canada**

Dr. Jon Kelly is a leading expert on player safeguards in gaming. For more than a decade he has been C.E.O. of the Responsible Gambling Council.

Jon has been invited to present at many conferences and seminars around the world including New Zealand, Norway, Australia, Italy, the United States, Singapore, Panama, the United Kingdom and Canada.

In 2011 Dr. Kelly was appointed to Singapore's International Advisory Panel on gambling safeguards.

The Responsible Gambling Council implements a yearly program of best practices research. It provides analysis and advice on responsible gambling strategies and programs to an increasing number of governments and gaming companies. The Council has also created an array of award-winning, evaluated youth awareness programs, advertising campaigns and on-site responsible gaming resource centres in 29 Canadian casinos.

In 2010 the Responsible Gambling Council published a set of world leading standards for venue-based responsible gambling programs and initiated the RG Check accreditation program.

Jon Kelly has an extensive background in public services as well as the private and non-profit sectors.

Jon is a graduate of the University of Western Ontario and holds a doctorate from the University of Edinburgh.



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## **About the Responsible Gambling Council**

### **Building Knowledge >> Creating Solutions**

The Responsible Gambling Council (RGC) is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to problem gambling prevention.

RGC works to reduce gambling risks by creating and delivering innovative awareness and information programs. It also promotes the adoption of improved play safeguards through best practices research, standards development and the RG Check accreditation program.

RGC is committed to bringing together all perspectives in the reduction of gambling problems including those of people with firsthand experience with gambling problems, gaming providers, regulators, policy makers and treatment professionals.

### **Innovative Awareness and Information Programs**

RGC works to reduce gambling risks by creating and delivering innovative awareness and information programs for specific age groups and communities, including adults, parents, youth and young adults, older adults, new Canadians and the aboriginal community.

#### ***Social Marketing Campaign***

Our Ontario-wide social marketing campaigns use marketing techniques such as mass media, ambient advertising and contests, to reach key audiences with problem gambling prevention messages.

#### ***Problem Gambling Prevention Week***

One of the largest programs of its kind in Canada, it is delivered to 45-plus Ontario communities, reaching more than three million households every year through interactive awareness displays, local advertising, activities and inserts in community newspapers.

### ***Youth Drama Program***

This interactive theatre production for high school students features young actors and age-relevant messaging. With tours across Ontario and Atlantic Canada, this play personalizes the issue of problem gambling by dramatizing the issue in a way that engages and entertains high school students.

### ***The Responsible Gaming Resource Centre (RGRC)***

Located in all Ontario Lottery and Gaming (OLG) Slots and Casinos, RGRCs provide patrons with information on safer gambling practices, as well as assistance and local referrals for help with gambling-related problems.

At Ontario's eight largest Centres, RGRC Service Coordinators are also on-site to answer questions or discuss an issue related to gambling problems. If staff is not on-site, and patrons require information about problem gambling, patrons can contact the Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline (OPGH).

### ***kts2***

Know the Score 2 (kts2) is an interactive problem gambling awareness program targeting college and university students, online and on campus. Open to post-secondary students in Ontario and Atlantic Canada, this fall kts2 will be engaging students in a quiz designed to give them information so they can make informed decisions.

## **Improved Safeguards for Safer Play**

RGC also promotes the adoption of improved play safeguards through best practices research, standards development and the RG Check accreditation program.

### ***RGC Centre for the Advancement of Best Practices***

The RGC Centre for the Advancement of Best Practices promotes the identification and adoption of best practices in problem gambling prevention. It conducts research and analysis of specific aspects of gambling, including gaming management and regulation in an effort to influence how gaming is provided.

### ***Responsible Gambling Index (RG Index)***

Developed by the RGC Centre for the Advancement of Best Practices, the Responsible Gambling Index (RG Index) is a set of standards that provides objective and independent benchmarks for the quality of responsible gambling programs designed and delivered by gaming companies, providing a high standard of consumer protection.

### ***Accreditation Program: RG Check***

RGC's accreditation program, RG Check, based on the Responsible Gambling Index (RG Index), offers gaming companies the opportunity of an independent endorsement of the quality of their responsible gambling safety net. The RG Check program is administered through an independent corporation set up by the Responsible Gambling Council.

## **Bringing Together All Perspectives**

RGC is committed to bringing together all perspectives in the reduction of gambling problems including those of people with firsthand experience with gambling problems, gaming providers, regulators, policy makers and treatment professionals.

### ***Discovery Conference***

RGC's Discovery Conference provides an international platform to explore, examine and discuss issues related to problem gambling prevention, bringing together people who are committed to problem gambling prevention, treatment, research and policy analysis.

### ***NewsScan***

RGC's free weekly e-newsletter for the responsible gambling sector, NewsScan, provides responsible gambling news, insights, upcoming events and other updates of interest to stakeholders across Canada and around the world.

### ***Canadian Partnership for Responsible Gambling (CPRG)***

RGC is a founding member of the Canadian Partnership for Responsible Gambling, a collaboration of non-profit organizations, gaming providers, research centres and regulators working to find and promote effective ways to reduce the risk of problem gambling. In addition, RGC provides administrative support for the partnership.