

At the end of 2010, we all surprised to say the least, to hear that an online gambling bill had passed muster in Washington DC. At the time we were concentrating our efforts on news coming out of New Jersey and Nevada; the two US states with the most to gain from legalizing online gambling. Both of these states have chiefly gambling-driven economies - Atlantic City and Las Vegas respectively.

The Washington DC iGaming measure was apparently 'snuck in' on the tail end of a budget bill, and essentially made the Capital City state, the first to legalize online gambling in the US post-UIGEA. As we see time after time in this country, the government barely has consensus on any matter, and in this matter they have the least. Despite the fact that the online gambling industry - if legalized - could offer potential big benefits to their budget deficit, both state and nationwide!

Now two local politicians from Washington DC want the iGaming law repealed and Democrat Michael Brown is the Council Member taking the heat. He was the bill's protagonist, and Democrat Council Members Tommy Wells and Phil Mendelson are arguing the bill was not subject to enough debate before being passed. The same could be said of the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act, when this was passed in 2006.

Brown maintains it took place in an above-board way, and that his former employers who were online gambling lobbyists, had nothing to do with promulgation of the bill. He also realistically maintains that the Washington DC iGaming initiative offers a "viable revenue enhancing vehicle to secure our social safety net and balance our budget during a time of fiscal crisis". We know that he is correct in this statement.

Tommy Wells and Phil Mendelson however cannot see beyond the wood for the trees, and they maintain that online gambling in the state will 'pose a threat to people at risk'. They go so far as to determine that the people at risk are the 'underprivileged'. Are these underprivileged people not exposed to the lottery already, and would they not be kept underprivileged by having their rights to online gambling denied?

In the meantime Oxford University's pioneering Internet Institute is celebrating its Tenth birthday, and first Professor of Internet Studies, Bill Dutton, from Southern California says; 73% of the population now has access to the internet - bearing mind this is in the UK. He also says that the internet has had an impact on every aspect of modern life, and has proven to be the mother-load for areas of study. Because of fast changing trends, it has also been found that the risks of dating online - as with online gambling and internet addiction - are massively exaggerated.

Perhaps Democrat Council Members Tommy Wells and Phil Mendelson need to read Prof Dutton's report? The Prof is about to write a book about his findings, and his argument is that 'the internet is the medium to empower individuals', and certainly not 'underprivilege' them.