

July 19, 2000

INTERNET GAMBLING PROHIBITION ACT OF 2000

-----

Statement of HON. RON PAUL OF TEXAS

[Page: E1269]

- Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the Internet Gambling Prohibition Act of 2000 for several reasons. The bill threatens Internet privacy, invites Federal Government regulation of the Internet and tramples States' rights.

- H.R. 3125 establishes a precedent for Federal content regulation of the Internet. By opening this Pandora's box, supporters of the bill ignore the unintended consequences. The principle will be clearly established that the Federal Government should intervene in Internet expression. This principle could be argued in favor of restrictions on freedom of expression and association. Disapprove of gambling? Let the government step in and ban it on the Internet! Minority rights are obviously threatened by majority whims.

- The bill calls for Federal law enforcement agencies, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to expand surveillance in order to enforce the proposed law. In order to enforce this bill (should it become law), law enforcement would have to obtain access to an individual's computer to know if one is gambling online. Perhaps Internet Service Providers can be enlisted as law enforcement agents in the same way that bank tellers are forced to spy on their customers under the Bank Secrecy Act? It was this sort of intrusion that caused such a popular backlash against the 'Know Your Customer' proposal.

- Several States have already addressed the issue, and Congress should recognize States' rights. The definition of 'gambling' in the bill appears narrow but could be 'reinterpreted' to include online auctions or even day trading (a different sort of gambling). Those individuals who seek out such thrills will likely soon find a good substitute which will justify the next round of federal Internet regulation.