



Urban League of
Greater Kansas City

1710 Paseo Blvd
Kansas City, Missouri 64108

816 471 0550
816 471 3064

March 17, 2015

Rep. Emanuel Cleaver II
U.S. House of Representatives
2335 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

*Empowering Communities.
Changing Lives.*

Re: H.R.707, Restore America's Wire Act

Dear Congressman Cleaver:

As Chief Executive Officer of the Urban League of Greater Kansas City, I am writing to thank you for your past support of legislation to reinstate a longstanding ban on Internet gambling and provide Congress the chance to more fully consider the significant ramifications of legalizing such activities. H.R. 707, Restore America's Wire Act, is a bi-partisan bill which reinstates the longstanding view of the Justice Department and numerous federal courts that the Wire Act bans Internet gambling.

As you know, the Urban League of Greater Kansas City is a 95-year old, multi-racial organization dedicated to the economic advancement and empowerment of African Americans and other minorities. From time to time we take positions on legislation we believe will have an impact on the advancement of this mission. In our measured opinion, online gambling presents a special threat to African Americans and other minorities in our community, particularly the economically disadvantaged who may be lured by the prospect of winning "easy money" by gambling on their mobile phones, tablets, or computers. A 2009 study commissioned by the National Institute of Health (NIH) bears out such concerns. According to the NIH, African Americans are more likely than the general population to become what it calls "disaffected gamblers." Couple this with the fact that a recent Pew Institute study demonstrates that African Americans are more likely to use their cell phones for purposes other than making phone calls, and in our view we have a problem.

We are also concerned that Internet gambling may cut into our tax base and pose a direct threat to jobs and economic growth in our City. As you know, local brick and mortar casinos have become economic engines for job growth and tourism in our area. If online gambling were to be legalized, casino patrons would be less inclined to spend their money at our thriving local casinos. And our casinos – as well as the surrounding bars, restaurants and shops – would not have the hiring needs they currently enjoy.

In advance of next Thursday's Judiciary Committee hearing on Internet gambling, the KC Urban League respectfully asks that you again co-sponsor this very important legislation.

Respectfully,

Gwendolyn Grant
President & CEO