

# Internet Gambling: Barney Frank to Repeal UIGEA with support from the European Union

Contributed by Thomas Jensen  
Thursday, 12 April 2007  
Last Updated Thursday, 12 April 2007

The Chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, Barney Frank of Massachusetts is about to introduce a bill to end the ban on internet gambling imposed by the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act of 2006. Frank has called UIGEA the "stupidest law ever passed" and is looking into introduce the legislation with the help of Southern Nevada Congresswoman, Shelley Berkley and others.

"I want to get it undone," Frank told reporters.

A bill to end a ban imposed last year on online gambling in the United States will be presented within two weeks but will likely need time to garner support, U.S. Rep. Barney Frank said on Thursday.

"I think a reconsideration among my colleagues is beginning but it's not far enough along yet," Frank said. "If the storm of public unhappiness is great enough then I will try to substantially revise that ban."

Could the European Union get involved?

In a letter to President George W. Bush, Arizona Senator Jon Kyl bragged about wiping out over \$7 billion in market capitalization from AIM listed publicly traded gaming companies. Kyl's actions and UIGEA bothered the European Union which is home to several internet gambling firms that were forced to withdraw from the United States. After a visit from Frank, the EU internal market chief Charlie McCreevy hinted he may challenge the ban at the World Trade Organization.

Antigua & Barbuda has already won a landmark internet gambling case over the United States at the World Trade Organization. The WTO recently released the official 215 page report declaring that the United States failed to change legislation that unfairly targets internet gambling websites. The WTO agreed with Antigua and stated that the United States could only block such websites if its laws were equally applied to domestic firms that offer other forms of internet gambling such as remote betting on horse racing. Internet gambling firms have long contested that the US move is simply protectionism.

"I am not going to draw a distinction between poker and blackjack," Frank said. This is music to the ears of the entire internet gambling industry. Many within the industry thought that online poker could receive an exemption to the existing law, however, Frank's comments clearly indicate that his legislation will help internet casinos & sports betting websites as well.