



"Any law which UPLIFTS  
human personality is JUST.

Any law which DEGRADES  
human personality is UNJUST."  
- Martin Luther King, Jr.

**STOP**  
PREDATORY  
GAMBLING

100 Maryland Avenue NE, Room 311, Washington, DC, 20002 • 1-800-664-2680 • [mail@stoppredatorygambling.org](mailto:mail@stoppredatorygambling.org)

**“A house divided against itself cannot stand,  
but let’s cross our fingers and hope that luck will pull us through.” \***

December 2008

Dear Friend:

Imagine how America would be today if that was really Abraham Lincoln’s message to the country.

Or if Franklin Roosevelt, instead of challenging all Americans to buy savings bonds for the war effort in the shadow of the Great Depression, had urged the public to buy lottery tickets by declaring "This could be your ticket out!"

Or if Ronald Reagan had said “Let’s wish upon a rainbow and hope for Mr. Gorbachev to tear down this wall.”

These leaders led America through turbulent times by inspiring us to hope for the best and then challenging us to go work for it. They called on us not to simply think of our own needs and wants but to *invest* in a common purpose.

Their call for us to join in common purpose sharply contrasts with what has become the daily voice of government to most Americans - state lottery advertisements.

Even now, in the midst of a global economic crisis, plummeting pension values, unaffordable health care, high food costs and millions of American families facing foreclosure, state government – “the voice of the people” – continues to aggressively advertise predatory lottery products.

This is not an issue about whether people can gamble. It is not about people playing poker on Friday nights with the guys from the neighborhood. It is about *predatory* gambling, the practice of using gambling to prey on human weakness for profit and it has become the preferred method for government to raise money for public services.

Predatory gambling is government’s version of subprime lending and it has divided America into two classes of people – the investor class and the lottery class. The investor class has mutual funds and investment vehicles to save for college and retirement while the lottery class, according to the Consumer Federation of America, represents the more than 1 out of 5 Americans who think the best way to save for retirement is to play the lottery.

Public officials and citizens openly describe this scheme as a “tax on the stupid.” Can you imagine the class action law suits by state attorneys general everywhere if Vanguard or Fidelity Investments offered to the public “an investment portfolio for the stupid” and marketed it as the “All It Takes Is a Dollar and a Dream Fund”?

AIG and Lehman Brothers executives were part of what has been recently called “casino capitalism” – using predatory practices and financial gimmicks to promote an illusion of free money, all at the expense of unsuspecting Americans. Why would anyone think a government run like a casino is going to turn out any better?

On this issue, our democracy is broken and we have the power to fix it – but only if we unite in a common purpose. You have the power to pull down lottery advertising across the nation and it is vital that you exercise this power.

**Exercise your power in three ways:**

- 1) After reading this letter, go online to [StopPredatoryGambling.org](http://StopPredatoryGambling.org) and sign our National Petition to Stop Predatory Lottery Advertising. The first stage of our goal is to collect 25,000 online signers.
- 2) After you sign, please get at least five other people to sign the online petition: family members, friends and co-workers.
- 3) Please donate \$25 or more to help us cover the cost of the national petition drive. As you select your charitable donations in these economic times, we hope you will consider our mission as one of your priorities. You can donate easily and securely online at [StopPredatoryGambling.org](http://StopPredatoryGambling.org) through PayPal or you can mail a donation using the enclosed response envelope.

If you or someone you know does not have internet access and wants to sign the petition, please call our office line at 1-800-664-2680 and we will make sure their name is added.

One of America’s most sacred founding principles was “no taxation without representation.” It’s time the principle of “no taxation by exploitation” was added right beneath it.

You have the ability to send a message to America that we are a nation of strong families and communities...not a collection of selfish individuals who prey on the weaknesses of our neighbors for profit.

Sincerely,

Les Bernal  
Executive Director

P.S. In a recent *New York Times* story, Emily Haisley of the Yale School of Management said “When people view themselves as doing worse financially, that motivates them to purchase lottery tickets. People look to the lottery to get back to where they were financially.” You have the power to stop this exploitation that is being done in your name, by our government. Take action to stop it by signing the online petition and making a donation now. Thank you.