



# Why we matter: the Campaign for Fairer Gambling

In this article, penned by founder of the Campaign for Fairer Gambling, Derek Webb explains how his philanthropy efforts in gambling reform took him stateside



Derek Webb, Campaign for Fairer Gambling  
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Derek Webb, the founder and funder of the Campaign for Fairer Gambling, has been successful in gambling related matters as a poker player, a casino table game inventor, a litigant, a litigation funder and a reform campaigner. He philanthropically supports gambling reforms and selected bodies helping with

gambling harm lived experience and gambling harm amelioration.

My Campaign for Fairer Gambling (CFG) began in the UK with an event in the British Parliament in 2013, where we called for a change to the rules on addictive machine games that were causing harm on Britain's high streets.

Fixed odds betting terminals (FOBTs) allowed people to stake £100 a spin, often with disastrous consequences. After years of campaigning, we succeeded in reducing the maximum stake from £100 to £2. After this victory, I decided to close CFG and support others in the online gambling reform and harm amelioration spaces.

I determined that it would be too difficult to campaign on online gambling in the US as it was a state rights matter. A letter from the American Gaming Association (AGA) to the Department of Justice in November 2022 changed my opinion and I restarted CFG as US facing.

The AGA letter attempted to put an estimate on the illegal market, but it had not used the expertise of the leading analysts in this field, Yield Sec. The Betting and Gaming Council (BGC) in Britain had previously commissioned a Yield Sec report but quoted from it without publishing it. This led me to take the view that there were some aspects of the truth about the illegal market that trade bodies disliked.

A CFG report by Yield Sec, published in June 2025, shows that without any legalization, 0.31% of income (per capita or by whole population group) goes to online gambling. However, this increases to 0.77% when betting is legalized and 1.12% when gaming is legalized. If legal gambling was replacing illegal these 141% and 261% increases would be closer to zero.

I will, for now, oppose any US state legalization of online gambling. The primary purpose of gambling legalization is to eliminate illegal gambling. But that is not happening in the US. The Federal Betting Excise Tax, of 0.25% of sports betting handle, was created to combat illegal gambling and should have been used for that purpose.

The secondary purpose of legalization is to generate tax revenue. A tax rate of only 25% does not generate fiscal benefit in excess of the downsides. Online gambling has low employment, short supply chains and minimal economic multipliers, based on reports by the National Economic Research Associates on the UK and NJ markets. There is an extra burden of the costs of harm on services such as health and justice. Adequate resources for harm amelioration must be provided.

Recently, the CFG responded to the Commodities and Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) request for roundtable submissions on the subject of sports

predictions markets. Our submission supported the notion, but with caveats: that there would be adequate enforcement against illegal predictions and against illegal conventional gambling.

Critics of the CFG submission failed to mention these caveats. Then the critics claimed that the CFTC sports predictions were a done deal. But if it was a done deal the CFG submission was irrelevant, so why bother criticizing CFG?

Some critics claim I am an “anti-gambling prohibitionist”. This is false. I have never advocated for prohibition. Other critics, and occasionally the same critics, claim that I have an ulterior financial motive. This is also false. After the sale of my casino table game assets to GLXZ in 2011, I did receive payments over several years, but these were fixed payments of the debt owed to me. The GLXZ shares I acquired as part of the sale were disposed of in 2019.

I am a philanthropist with time, resources and expertise. I would never have grown into this role but for a number of factors. Firstly, I prevailed in complex US federal civil anti-trust litigation, which taught me how to understand evidential standards. Secondly, I believe the Gambling Commission in Great Britain was not delivering the licensing objectives of the 2005 Gambling Act. Thirdly, FOBTs had been introduced legally in betting shops before the Act. Fourthly, the Act did not require online operators to have tax liability, servers and legal presence in the UK.

My personal position is that gambling should be permitted to cater for demand, but not promoted to create demand. By promoted, I am referring to online gambling affiliates, marketing offers, data-based algorithm generated personalized marketing with associated VIP schemes.

There are positives to my role. I meet brilliant, dedicated people who want to make a difference. We are appreciated by those who recognize how helpful we are. It is an intellectually stimulating activity. There are negative aspects, but these usually strengthen my resolve. False assertions against my associates are similar to those made against me, cementing our mutual loyalty.

Recently, illegal gambling was a primary topic at an International Association of Gaming Advisors event. The European Casino Association (ECA) endorsed a report by Yield Sec. There is a Memorandum of Understanding between the ECA, AGA and BGC on this topic. Also recently, the CFG representative, the exceptional Brianne Doura-Schawohl, was speaking on gambling at the G7 Summit in Calgary. I am proud of the work that CFG does in this space.

The British “gambling debate” on social media is vitriolic. The tragedy for the trade is that some have chosen to stir up the vitriol rather than temper it.

Attacking academics, health professionals and bereaved families is unproductive. In my opinion, it confirms the perceptions of the low standards of the trade. Credibility for the position of alleged superiority of legals over illegals, based on protections and responsibility, is diminished.

Online gambling proponents often assert that a wealthy gambler losing millions is exercising free will and rationally enjoying entertainment, irrespective of the pull factors of addictive content and marketing. Please consider the juxtaposition: I enjoy spending my millions in a way that is rational to me. How could any proponent have the audacity to question my integrity?

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