

Fed, Treasury Accept PPA Request to Delay UIGEA

Washington, DC – The Poker Players Alliance (PPA), the leading poker grassroots advocacy group with more than one million members nationwide, today applauded the six month delay of the implementation of the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act (UIGEA) regulations. The Federal Reserve and Department of Treasury today extended the deadline for UIGEA enforcement until June 1, 2010, which is the result of a petition filed by the PPA, the National Thoroughbred Racing Association and the American Greyhound Track Operators Association. The groups filed the petition for an extension in order to give lawmakers and financial institutions more time to clarify definitions contained in UIGEA, as well as develop policies and procedures to ensure compliance with the law.

“The PPA is extremely pleased with the decision by the Federal Reserve and Treasury to grant the six month extension. This is a great victory for poker, but an even greater victory for advocates of good and fair public policy,” said PPA Chairman and former Senator Alfonse D’Amato. “These additional months are critical to provide legislators time to clarify UIGEA and pass legislation to license and regulate poker early next year. It is our hope that another extension would be granted should the deadline approach before these pieces of legislation can be passed.”

Concerns about the vague language contained in UIGEA, and the resulting challenge of enforcing the law, have been raised by the banking and gambling communities since the law was passed in 2006. PPA members have been, and continue to be, contacting their members of Congress via phone, email and visits to urge clarification of the UIGEA regulations. In fact, over 300,000 letters alone have been sent to members of Congress by PPA members.

Given the significant struggles of banks over the past few years, deputizing them to enforce a poorly written and overly vague law would add to their already heavy burden. To this end, several leading banks and financial services groups also expressed their support of a delay with the Federal Reserve and Department of Treasury.

Delaying implementation of the UIGEA regulations, which were pushed through by the previous Administration at the eleventh hour, will give Congress time to clarify the law to give clearer direction to the banks and those impacted by UIGEA.

While pleased with the delay, the PPA remains committed to passing legislation to license and regulate online poker. UIGEA does not provide protections for underage and compulsive gamblers – the licensing and regulation proposed in legislation such as Chairman Barney Frank's H.R. 2267 and Senator Robert Menendez's S. 1597 would protect these vulnerable communities. A hearing will be held December 3rd in the House Financial Services Committee on Chairman Frank's bill.

"PPA is continuing its efforts to urge members of Congress to implement thoughtful and effective regulation of the online poker as opposed to outright prohibitions, which history has shown do not work," said D'Amato. "We are thankful to our competitors the National Thoroughbred Racing Association and the American Greyhound Track Operators Association and for the dozens of members of Congress who voiced their support for this petition through letters to Secretary Geithner and Chairman Bernanke. The PPA looks forward to working with regulators and legislators to pass legislation that protects consumers and the great game of poker."