

# **Poker Players Alliance Members Meet with Washington Lawmakers**

## **Hope to Gain Support for Overturning State Ban on Online Poker**

Olympia, WA (March 17, 2011) – Members of the Poker Players Alliance (PPA) from across the state of Washington are spending the day in Olympia today to ask their state lawmakers to overturn the draconian state law that makes Washingtonians felons for enjoying a hand of poker on their home computers. The PPA, the leading poker grassroots advocacy group with more than one million members nationwide and more than 20,000 in Washington State, has been leading the efforts in the state to protect players from potential criminalization and provide them with a safe, regulated, national environment in which to play online poker.

“Washington is the only state that makes it not only a crime, but a felony on par with child pornography, for its own citizens to play poker at their home computer. Surely, lawmakers in the state can recognize that penalizing their constituents for opting to enjoy a hand of poker on the computer versus at the casino down the street is not only illogical but ineffective,” said John Pappas, executive director of the PPA. “Our goal with this lobby day is to raise awareness of the incongruity of this law and identify alternatives for legislators to support that will remove this criminalization while providing a safe and regulated online poker market.”

Joining more than 20 Washingtonians in Olympia are three renowned professional poker players – Andy Bloch, Linda Johnson and Jan Fisher. The group of players will meet with at least 45 state legislators to discuss the impact of the state

ban and how overturning the ban and supporting federal and perhaps even state regulation of online poker would result in consumer protections for players and millions of dollars in much needed state revenue.

The state law, passed in 2006 and recently upheld by the State Supreme Court, makes it a class "C" felony for an individual to play poker online from their home computer punishable by a \$ 10,000 fine and/or five years in prison. A 2010 poll of Washington State voters found that an overwhelming 80 percent of them disagree with this law, and over half believe online poker should be licensed, regulated and taxed.

"We have the support of the public for overturning this ban. We have the support of the players. We hope that after today, we will have the support of state lawmakers as well and can begin the process of removing the criminalization of the individual players and establishing a safe, regulated online poker market in Washington State," continued Pappas.