

Nov. 9, 2009

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**GOVERNOR PATRICK'S 9-C CUTS TO PROBLEM GAMBLING SERVICES:  
DISPROPORTIONATELY HARSH AND POORLY TIMED**

**BOSTON, MA** – On Thursday October 29, 2009, Kathleen M. Scanlan, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling was at the State House for a hearing about bringing casino gambling to Massachusetts. She was just about to share testimony that, for some, gambling can lead to ruined lives and family devastation, and to urge policy makers to enter into the potential expansion of gambling carefully, putting responsible gambling policies and practices in place at the outset to reduce the negative impact on Massachusetts' residents.

Just before her testimony, she received a call from her office telling her that Governor Patrick's 9-C cuts included a cut of 50% (from \$1 million to \$500,000) for problem gambling services. These are the only services for problem gamblers and their families in the Commonwealth.

"I was stunned. I would not have anticipated, in an atmosphere of serious discussion of expanded gambling in Massachusetts, a cut that could wipe out the only services the state provides to prevent, intervene and treat gambling problems in the Commonwealth," said Scanlan.

In fact, Scanlan has often praised Governor Patrick publicly for his commitment to reducing the real human costs related to gambling. At one point she said, "The Patrick Administration, Treasurer Cahill and legislators have been extremely supportive of properly funding the Council to deal with additional compulsive gambling issues."

Scanlan was referring to Governor Patrick's casino bill. In a Sept. 18, 2007 *Boston Globe* article discussing expanded gambling he was quoted as saying, "2.5% of gross casino proceeds would be placed in a public health trust fund to pay for increased problem gambling referrals."

Instead, Governor Patrick's 9-C cut have left the 26-yr old organization in danger of no longer being able to refer problem gamblers to help, and no longer being able to provide a safety net for individuals who suffer problems as a result of state-sponsored gambling.

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Meanwhile, the Mass. State Lottery continues to be the most profitable lottery in the country. "State regulations that direct funding for services from the Lottery toward reducing, preventing, and treating gambling problems were already inadequate before this drastic cut. A state that sponsors or promotes gambling needs to take responsibility for addressing the downside as a cost of doing business," remarked Scanlan.

The Mass. Council is urging the Governor to restore funding, and to stop the dismantling of problem gambling services in Massachusetts. For more information, please contact Kathleen M. Scanlan, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling at 617-426-4554 / [kathy@masscompulsivegambling.org](mailto:kathy@masscompulsivegambling.org).

*Founded in 1983, the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling is a private, non-profit public health agency dedicated to providing leadership to reduce the social, financial, and emotional costs of problem gambling and to promote a continuum of prevention and intervention strategies including: information and public awareness, community education and professional training, advocacy, and referral services for problem gamblers, their loved ones and the greater community.*

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