

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 3, 2005

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### **PROBLEM GAMBLING AWARENESS WEEK -- MARCH 6-12**

**BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS** – Governor Mitt Romney has joined the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling to proclaim March 6-12, 2005, Problem Gambling Awareness Week. The goal of the campaign is to increase public awareness about the disorder and promote the availability of problem gambling treatment services for people in the Commonwealth who are experiencing problems with their own or a loved one's gambling.

"For some people, recreational gambling is not a problem. For others, it is a serious problem with potentially devastating social, financial and emotional consequences," said Kathleen Scanlan, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling. "Symptoms of a gambling problem may include being preoccupied with gambling; betting increasing amounts of money over time; repeated unsuccessful attempts to stop or control gambling; and chasing losses," she said.

A primary focus of Problem Gambling Awareness Week is to promote that treatment services are available. In Massachusetts, several counseling centers across the state have therapists who are specially trained to assist people with gambling problems and their family members. And, funding for these services exists. In a survey conducted in 2001, 11 of 13 health insurance companies in MA covered all treatment services requested for clients having gambling problems. For people who do not have insurance coverage or finances to pay for treatment out of pocket, funding is offered by the MA Dept. of Health.

Self-help support groups, including Gambler's Anonymous, Bettor's Anonymous and Gam-Anon are other options for help. For meeting times and locations and other information about problem gambling and available resources, please visit the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling's website at [www.masscompulsivegambling.org](http://www.masscompulsivegambling.org) or call the organization's toll-free Helpline (1-800-GAM-1234). The Helpline, which is staffed by trained specialists, is confidential and available 24-hours a day, 7-days a week.

*The Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling is a private, non-profit health agency dedicated to reducing the social, financial and emotional costs of problem gambling. The Council provides information, education, advocacy and referral services for problem gamblers, their loved ones and the greater community.*

***DIGITAL PHOTO OF GOVERNOR ROMNEY PRESENTING PROCLAMATION TO COUNCIL AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST***