

**TOBIAS ELLWOOD MP**



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

26 February 2008

Dear Colleague

**Stakes and Prizes of Adult Gaming Machines**

The Conservative Party has called on the Government to review the stakes and prizes of adult gaming machines in order to ensure that the 2005 Gambling Act has not pushed punters towards harder forms of gambling. There have been clear signs that many family seaside arcades have suffered as people move out of these traditionally safer gaming venues.

In order to allow Adult Gaming Centres (AGCs) to remain competitive we are recommending two changes:

1. Increase of stakes for category B3 machines from £1 to £2.
2. Increase of category B3 machines from the current limit of four per establishment to a maximum of 20% of the total number of slot machines per establishment.

The 2005 Gambling Act reduced stakes from £2 to £1 and placed a limit on the number of B3 machines in any premises. However, the Government cannot produce any evidence as to why these changes were made. Family arcades are a vibrant part of many seaside towns and it is wrong that they have suffered from an unintended consequence of Government legislation.

Seaside arcades have suffered huge downturns in trade since the Gambling Act came into force. The British Amusement Catering Trade Association (BACTA) estimates that the sector has experienced a 21% reduction in revenues since 1 September 2007.

**EDM 840**

Colleagues are encouraged to sign 840 which calls on the Government to introduce the same recommendations as mentioned above.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely

Tobias Ellwood

## NOTES

### **Fixed Odds Betting Terminals**

We have expressed concerns about the growing popularity of FOBTs which are found in Bookies and can take a maximum stake of £100 every 20 seconds. We have called on the Gambling Commission to conduct a review of their use.

On 20<sup>th</sup> February Gambling Minister Gerry Sutcliffe finally conceded our point and asked for a review to take place.

Colleagues are recommended to visit their local bookies (if you are not familiar with one already!) to see how these relatively new machines work.

### **Review of Gambling Policy**

This announcement is the first of a series of changes we plan to make in order to amend a number of loop holes in the 2005 Gambling Act.

We want to ensure we have fair and enforceable regulation at every level so we can protect those who move from seeing gambling as entertainment; (knowing you are likely to lose) to those who become addicted (and think you are likely to win).