

The commercial casino industry's top trade group said Friday that it supports efforts by U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry

Reid to fully legalize Internet poker.

The American Gaming Association said the bill Reid's pushing includes solid oversight and consumer protections.

"Current online gambling laws do not provide these safeguards, leaving players and the system open to fraud, cheating and other illegal acts," Frank Fahrenkopf, the group's chief executive, said in a statement.

The association, based in Washington, D.C., represents the interests of the nation's more than 440 commercial casinos, which account for more than half the gambling revenue generated in the United States.

The bill already faces opposition from some Republican leaders.

Analyst Bill Lerner of Union Gaming Group told investors this week that the measure would have to pass before the current Congress ends its session next week and Republicans take control.

Reid, D-Nev., said in a statement Thursday that his bill would, for the first two years, allow Internet poker to be offered only by existing casino companies — either commercial casinos already approved by various states or licensees approved by American Indian tribes.

Smaller casinos have expressed concerns that allowing Internet poker would cut into their business.

## Casino Trade Group Supports Internet Poker Bill - ABC News

Written by Administrator

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The association — acknowledging varying opinions among its members — has not previously backed any of several federal bills aimed at legalizing and regulating online gambling.

Most online gambling became illegal in 2006 with a new federal law prohibiting banks and credit card companies from making payments to gambling websites. The law included exceptions for fantasy sports, horse racing and state lotteries.

Reid's bill would require licensees to accept only American players for the first three years and offer stronger oversight of the multibillion dollar industry.

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