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WASHINGTON – Congressman Spencer Bachus (AL-6) called the defeat of legislation designed to block a ban on illegal Internet gambling a “victory for young people.”

The House Financial Services Committee today voted down a bill that would have prevented federal agencies from issuing rules implementing the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act (UIGEA).

As Ranking Member, Bachus was instrumental in defending the law during debate in committee.

Bachus helped author the ban, which was signed into law by President Bush in October 2006.

Bachus issued the following statement.

“Today’s vote was a victory for young people because illegal Internet gambling brings the casino into their bedrooms and dorm rooms, sometimes with tragic consequences.

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“Whatever else is said about it, illegal Internet gambling is a federal crime and a crime in all 50 states.□ Its most vulnerable victims are the young people who by the tens of thousands have been exposed to the risk of becoming compulsive, addictive gamblers.□ A study by McGill University found that nearly one-third of teenage compulsive gamblers attempted suicide.

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“The Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act (UIGEA) of 2006 has had encouraging early success.□ A study by the Annenberg Center at the University of Pennsylvania said that online gambling among college students has decreased by 75% since its enactment.□ Large operators in the Internet gambling industry have pulled out of the U.S. market.

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“Strong support for the law has come from 49 state attorneys general, the

American Psychiatric Association, numerous faith-based organizations, major professional sports organizations and the NCAA to name just a few groups.

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“After this long campaign by offshore gambling interests to block or repeal the law, what Congress needs to do now is urge the Treasury Department and Federal Reserve to swiftly finalize their proposed rules to implement UIGEA.□□ The regulations are long overdue, and our young people need this protection now.”

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