

Dear Mr Salter,

## New Gambling Bill

We are writing to you to voice our concerns about the new Gambling Bill. The draft Bill is currently before the joint committee chaired by John Greenway and has commenced the pre-legislative scrutiny procedure. We are most concerned that in its present form it will affect the Reading FC lottery which we operate locally to raise funds for the Reading FC Academy.

We have to operate under the strict regime of the 1976 Lotteries and Amusements Act which imposes harsh penalties for minor infringements in lottery management. The paperwork is onerous and costly to Reading FC but we endure it because it demonstrates the integrity of our lottery and also affords us protection from unlawful lotteries.

We have to work hard to recruit people into our lottery and we consider it unfair that commercial organisations will be able to operate schemes similar to ours even more freely than they are able to at present.

What the Government proposes to do in the new Bill is to ignore the recommendations of the Gambling Review Body, the Gaming Board and the Lotteries Council and permit commercial organisations to operate pseudo-lotteries (prize draws). Participants will have to go through a simple - and we mean simple - question and answer process where the vast majority get the answer right. The winner is then chosen by a lottery. The organisers will not have to be registered. There will be no public protection; no good cause; and no public accountability.

We have now learned that the Government proposes to permit the operation of unlicensed lotteries for commercial gain provided they contain "a degree of skill or knowledge". This could take the form of "Who works in a Fire Station? All who get the answer right go into the prize draw." We are greatly concerned that these kinds of promotions will be able to proliferate in areas where we are prohibited by law from operating as well as in our traditional sales areas.

We consider this proposal to be not only unfair, but also a potential threat to our fundraising. If the Government stands by its statement that "*A scheme in which a degree of skill or knowledge is needed in order to secure a prize will not, therefore, be capable of being a lottery*", we fear a proliferation of minimal skill schemes operated by shops, supermarkets, bookmakers and direct mail promoters all taking custom away from our fundraising lotteries.

Would you please speak up on our behalf as the new Gambling Bill goes through the various committee stages.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Kearney  
Reading FC.

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