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## Members of Congress to Meet with EU Delegation Regarding Trade Dispute

*Avoidable Dispute with EU on Internet Gambling Enforcement Could Have Long-Ranging Economic Consequences for US*

(Washington, DC) On Wednesday, Congressman Robert Wexler (D-FL), Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe and a member of the House Judiciary Committee, will meet with a delegation from the European Union (EU) Commission visiting Washington this week as part of its investigation into US enforcement on Internet Gaming. The EU argues that the US violated its commitments under the World Trade Organization (WTO) to offer market access to the US gaming services market to WTO members, and subsequently announced its intention to withdraw those commitments by way of offering compensation in other sectors.

The EU has raised serious concerns that the US Department of Justice (DOJ) and the United States Trade Representative (USTR) are unfairly still pursuing prosecutions of companies and individuals for their activities prior to the US withdrawal of those WTO commitments. These prosecutions are taking place despite these companies and individuals stopping their activities when the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act was passed. The EU complaint also highlights the troubling fact that US businesses are still active and currently operating uninterrupted Internet Gambling businesses but do not suffer the threat of criminal enforcement similar to that of EU companies. In advance of Wednesday's meeting, Congressman Wexler released the following statement:

"I look forward to meeting with the EU Commission delegation to discuss efforts to resolve this debilitating trade dispute. The Administration and Congress must take the complaint lodged by the EU regarding Internet Gaming seriously given its impact on the American economy and our national interests as a whole. I am deeply concerned that this dispute has the potential to escalate and cause even greater damage to America's reputation globally as well as our economic relationship with the EU and international community. It is critical that Congress work closely and expeditiously with the Administration to avoid this unnecessary escalation. At this juncture – the Administration must address the lack of a coherent explanation by the USTR and DOJ on this issue, despite repeated requests from me and other members of the Congress.

"I am troubled by the potential collateral damage to US interests and the global trading system this unresolved issue is fomenting. It is essential that the Bush Administration immediately account for a policy that is negatively impacting key international relationships. I am increasingly concerned that if these disputes are not able to be resolved, it will likely mean costly retaliatory measures will be taken against US economic interests. It is apparent having spoken with my EU counterparts and after meeting with representatives of the aggrieved EU industry – they do not want to push this dispute all the way to the WTO for a ruling. It is also clear that they would rather not implement blocking measures to counter US enforcement in the EU or consider sanctions against US business interests. This is not the way America should treat its allies and major trading partners, especially when there are a myriad of critical transatlantic and international issues to deal with, some of which will be more difficult for the US and allies to address – given the actions being taken by the Bush Administration in this dispute."

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*Congressman Wexler is Chairman of the Europe Subcommittee and a senior member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and the House Judiciary Committee; and he also sits on the Financial Services Committee.*