

# Senate Bill Calls for Regulating, Not Banning, Online Poker

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WASHINGTON -- The effort to roll back an Internet gambling ban has reached the Senate, with a bill by Sen. Robert Menendez that calls for licensing and regulating online poker and other "games of skill" instead of outlawing them.

Menendez, a New Jersey Democrat, intends to introduce the bill today, according to the Poker Players Alliance, which lobbies against the 2006 ban.

This would be the first bill introduced in the Senate to weaken the ban, which prohibits banks and credit card companies from accepting payments for online gambling.

The Senate bill's introduction follows a 30-16 vote on Sept. 16 by the House Financial Services Committee that would require federal agencies to define unlawful Internet gambling before completing regulations to enforce the ban.

"This action by Senator Menendez is yet another example that prohibitions on Internet gambling, and specifically poker, will not work to protect consumers," former Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, R-N.Y., who is the chairman of the Poker Players Alliance, said in a statement.

The Menendez bill is similar to legislation introduced in June 2007 in the House by Rep. Robert Wexler, D-Fla.

Wexler's bill has 22 co-sponsors, including Reps. Shelley Berkley, D-Nev., and Jon Porter, R-Nev.