

Online gaming ban not in federal spending bill

By Steve Tetreault and Howard Stutz, Las Vegas Review-Journal

WASHINGTON – Congress in its final major bill of the year unveiled Tuesday declined to support a call by billionaire casino owner Sheldon Adelson for a ban on legalized Internet gambling.

The \$1.1 trillion measure would fund most government operations through September of next year, making it a must-pass measure. It also contains dozens of individual policy provisions sought by lawmakers and special interests.

But after being flooded by lobbyists from both sides, House leaders declined to get involved in a battle that caused a major split in the casino industry and sparked speculation of an unusual alliance between Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada and Adelson, a leading conservative.

The omnibus spending bill did not contain Adelson-sought provisions that would reinstate federal law to ban all forms of Internet gambling. A December 2011 Justice Department opinion held that the relevant law, the Interstate Wire Act of 1961, only outlaws sports betting online.

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