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Attorney General Griffin Files Lawsuit against Online Gaming Platform VGW for Illegal Gambling

Griffin: 'Companies that operate gambling businesses in Arkansas are subject to our gambling laws, plain and simple'

LITTLE ROCK – Attorney General Tim Griffin issued the following statement after filing a lawsuit against VGW, an online gaming platform that features such games as Chumba Casino, LuckyLand Casino, LuckyLand Slots, and Global Poker:

"Arkansas's gambling laws are clear. If you're providing a means for Arkansans to gamble money within our state, you are subject to the rules and regulations that govern legal gambling.

"VGW provides Arkansans the opportunity to play various popular online games, and it claims that it is not operating a gambling business. But our review of the company shows that claim to be false. That's why I've sued the company today for violating the Arkansas Deceptive Trade Practices Act.

"VGW rests its claim that it does not provide gambling services on a distinction between two virtual currencies. One is called 'Gold Coins,' and it is effectively worthless. But consumers purchase Gold Coins with real money. When they do, they receive 'Sweeps Coins' as a bonus. Sweeps Coins can be used to play online casino-style games, and users can redeem Sweeps Coins they win through those games for actual cash. Any reasonable person would call that gambling.

“Decades before VGW launched its platforms, internet sweepstakes cafes promoted a similar arrangement. Consumers paid money for internet time, received ‘free’ credits, and used those credits to play games for the chance to win cash prizes. When challenged, the cafes argued that consumers were paying for internet time, not the opportunity to gamble. Courts repeatedly rejected the attempt to circumvent gambling laws by calling the activity a sweepstakes.

“VGW’s claim that the distinction between the virtual currency one buys and the virtual currency one redeems is weak at best, and courts have rejected this too-cute-by-half logic time and time again. Companies that operate gambling businesses in Arkansas are subject to our gambling laws, plain and simple. Our lawsuit seeks relief that includes restitution, penalties, taxes, and injunctive relief.”

To read a copy of the lawsuit, click here.

About Attorney General Tim Griffin

Tim Griffin was sworn in as the 57th Attorney General of Arkansas on January 10, 2023, having previously served as the state’s 20th Lieutenant Governor from 2015-2023. From 2011-2015, Griffin served as the 24th representative of Arkansas’s Second Congressional District, where he served on the House Committee on Ways and Means, House Armed Services Committee, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, House Committee on Ethics and House Committee on the Judiciary while also serving as a Deputy Whip for the Majority.

Griffin is currently an officer in the Arkansas Army National Guard and holds the rank of colonel. Griffin served as an officer in the U.S. Army Reserve Judge Advocate General’s (JAG) Corps for more than 28 years. In 2005, Griffin was mobilized to active duty as an Army prosecutor at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and served with the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) in Mosul, Iraq.

His previous assignments include serving as the Commander of the 2d Legal Operations Detachment in New Orleans, Louisiana; the Commander of the 134th Legal Operations Detachment at Fort Bragg, North Carolina; and as a Senior Legislative Advisor to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness at the Pentagon. Griffin earned a master’s degree in strategic studies as a Distinguished Honor Graduate from the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

Griffin also served as U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, and Special Assistant to the President and Deputy Director of Political Affairs for President George W. Bush; Special Assistant to Assistant Attorney General Michael Chertoff, Criminal Division, U.S. Department

of Justice; Special Assistant U.S. Attorney, U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Arkansas; Senior Investigative Counsel, Government Reform and Oversight Committee, U.S. House of Representatives; and Associate Independent Counsel, Office of Independent Counsel David M. Barrett, In re: HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros.

Griffin is a graduate of Magnolia High School, Hendrix College in Conway, and Tulane Law School in New Orleans. He attended graduate school at Oxford University. He is admitted to practice law in Arkansas (active) and Louisiana (inactive). Griffin lives in Little Rock with his wife, Elizabeth, a Camden native, and their three children.

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