

## 《双语新闻：韩国会议员拟立法解决网络成瘾现象》

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South Korea's parliament is considering a law that would classify online gaming as potentially antisocial addiction alongside gambling, drugs and alcohol.

The bill has won support from parents, religious groups and doctors but has alarmed the internet industry and enraged gamers. The legislation includes provisions to limit advertising, while a separate bill would take 1% of the gaming industry's revenue to create a fund to curb addiction.

The uproar over the legislation highlights conflicting social and economic priorities in South Korea. Internet entrepreneurs are prized as a source of innovation, but conservative politicians and many parents say online obsessions are taking a growing toll on schooling, families and workplaces.

"We need to create a clean Korea free from the four addictions," Hwang Woo-yea, an MP in the ruling party, said in a recent speech.

The legislative assault, backed by 14 ruling party lawmakers, is the latest phase in South Korea's culture wars. Headline-grabbing incidents such as the death by starvation of the infant daughter of two online gamers have fuelled a moral panic. A law passed in 2011 that bans gaming between midnight and dawn for anyone under age 16 is being challenged at South Korea's constitutional court.

"There is a huge prejudice that gaming is harmful," said Lee Byung-chan, an attorney involved in the constitutional court case. "Games are as harmful as alcohol, drugs and gambling, that's the prejudice."

Game companies have taken exception to being lumped together with drugs, alcohol and gambling, and say the bill is a death sentence for their industry. "The 100,000 people employed in the game industry are not drugmakers," said the Korea Internet and Digital Entertainment Association, which represents game companies.

online gaming has become a significant export industry. In 2012, MapleStory and other titles earned more cash from abroad for South Korea than the YouTube sensation Gangnam Style, K-pop music, movies and all other cultural exports combined.

The government started studying internet game addiction in 2011. Its latest annual study found that 2% of South Koreans aged 10-19, or about 125,000 people, needed treatment for excessive online gaming or were at risk of addiction.

"My parents tried to stop me but I kept playing. Even the government wouldn't have stopped me," said Shin Minchul, a 21-year-old college student as he recounted his heavy gaming past.



