

1 local level, the state level. We're happy that you as
2 a Commission will study the money and the muscle and
3 the pressure we have felt as citizens.

4 We look forward to working with you.

5 Thanks for being here.

6 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Barbara -- and please
7 help me with the correct pronunciation. Is it
8 Knickelbein.

9 MS. KNICKELBEIN: Knickelbein.

10 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Knickelbein.

11 MS. KNICKELBEIN: Good afternoon,
12 distinguished members of the Commission. My name is
13 Barbara Knickelbein. I'm the Maryland State
14 Coordinator for NCAGE and the chair of the Church and
15 Society Commission of the Glen Burnie United Methodist
16 Church.

17 I've come before you today to voice my
18 deep concern as an American about the rapid expansion
19 of gambling in this country in the last few years and
20 its negative economic and social impact on society.

21 Attached to my written statement is a
22 letter to the editor I had published recently in the

1 Baltimore Sun showing just one day of the 20 to 30
2 gambling related articles I read from mainstream
3 newspapers and magazine on a daily basis.

4 The more I read, the more I become alarmed
5 with its proliferation in my state, the neighboring
6 states, and throughout this country. Yes, gambling
7 does appear to bring jobs and money to some areas, but
8 it brings with it far much more trouble than it's
9 worth.

10 I've been fighting this battle on nothing
11 but economic and social grounds. Yet time and time
12 again, because I am an active leader in my local
13 church the press refers to it as a money versus morals
14 fight, and lest you think this is nothing but a
15 conservative Christian fight, I'd like to draw your
16 attention to the fact that the PBS show "Front Line"
17 and the ultra liberal Mother Jones Magazine recently
18 showed the down side of gambling. Mother Jones, July-
19 August '97 online magazine gives a state-by-state
20 accounting of the obscene amount of money the gambling
21 industry spends on lobbying efforts and campaign
22 contributions.

1 What is the average citizen to think?
2 What am I to think? Is our government truly for sale?

3 Since there is no massive grassroots
4 efforts supporting gambling, then why is there so much
5 attention on this subject? Frankly, money equals
6 access, and the gambling industry with its deep
7 pockets has the ear of our lawmakers.

8 All we're asking is that the gambling
9 industry tells the truth, the whole truth, and nothing
10 but the truth. When they approach our legislators,
11 they often pull revenue figures out of thin air and
12 don't offer proof to the validity of those figures.

13 They also downplay or totally ignore the
14 negative economic and social impact that their so-
15 called product brings to an area.

16 I'm very optimistic about the mission of
17 this distinguished Commission. You truly have our
18 country's future in your hands. We urge that legal
19 and factual studies be conducted that are not funded
20 by the gambling industry, showing the good, the bad,
21 and the ugly.

22 What we need from you is a commitment to

1 find that truth and a commitment to stem the purchase
2 of influence. Armed with the truth and on a level
3 playing field, we are confident that our legislators
4 will better be able to make prudent decisions in the
5 future and will see clearly that the bad and the ugly
6 far outweigh any good that gambling expansion brings.

7 Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Murrell -- is that
9 correct? -- Murrell Watkins.

10 MR. WATKINS: Murrell Watkins.

11 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Murrell Watkins.

12 Welcome.

13 MR. WATKINS: Thank you.

14 The impact of gambling in Atlantic City.
15 I feel that the gambling has affected the black
16 community and black businesses in the resort. The
17 destruction of the minority community due to the
18 improvement of roadway access routes and the new
19 Convention Center, the proposal of building a tunnel
20 through a stable black neighborhood, relocating people
21 in Baccarat Boulevard, residents in Pitney Village
22 must be relocated by the end of September 1997.