

1 continue as a great leader of nations, we must  
2 reassess our moral convictions and strengthen our  
3 moral foundations.

4 Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Bruce Barron. I  
6 understand Mr. Barron is not present.

7 Walt Barbee.

8 Jay Dee Hanson.

9 MR. HANSON: I'm here.

10 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Good.

11 MR. HANSON: Good afternoon. I'm pleased  
12 to present the position of the United Methodist  
13 General Board of Church and Society, the National  
14 Social Concerns Agency of the United Methodist Church.

15 We're pleased the Commission is holding  
16 hearings on this most important issue.

17 I might stop just for a second. There has  
18 been some discussion already about there being  
19 religious issues and there being economic issues. An  
20 essential element of protestant thought is you don't  
21 divide life into religious sectors and secular  
22 sectors.

1                   Gambling is a menace to business  
2 integrity. It breeds crime, and it is destructive of  
3 the interests of good government. The nation must  
4 rise in spiritual might in order to end this rapidly  
5 growing evil.

6                   These words might well be spoken about the  
7 rise of gambling in the U.S. today. They come from a  
8 statement on public morals passed by the 1940 General  
9 Conference of the Methodist Church and reflect the  
10 historic opposition of the United Methodist Church and  
11 its predecessor denominations to gambling.

12                   Gambling has consistently been one of the  
13 issues acted upon by the church's agencies dealing  
14 with public morals. Clearly the U.S. has not risen in  
15 spiritual might to end gambling. Indeed, gambling is  
16 growing, and nearly every state has some form of state  
17 sponsored gambling.

18                   Instead of using its might to fight  
19 gambling, the state has promoted gambling. Instead of  
20 protecting its citizens from those that would prey  
21 upon them, the state is promoting gambling as a  
22 revenue source.

1           In 1964, New Hampshire adopted the first  
2 state lottery. Since then states have promoted  
3 gambling as a legitimate mainstream leisure activity  
4 and revenue source. By 1992, gross gambling revenues  
5 for government and gaming establishes were more than  
6 six times what U.S. people spent on movies.

7           United Methodists oppose all forms of  
8 gambling. Our 68 annual conferences in the U.S. have  
9 worked hard to limit gambling. The Social Principles  
10 of the United Methodist Church, the highest public  
11 policy document for United Methodists, state that  
12 gambling is a menace to society, deadly to the best  
13 interests of moral, social, and economic life.

14           The Bible does not include explicit  
15 prohibitions against gambling, but gambling is one of  
16 the ways we place other things above God.

17           We are also called to love our neighbor as  
18 ourselves. We are not loving our neighbor when we  
19 permit practices which prey on weaknesses of our  
20 neighbor.

21           Gambling fosters greed and stimulates  
22 belief in fate and chance. It is an alternative

1 religious system. Government sponsorship of gambling  
2 might even be seen to violate the separation of church  
3 and state by promoting a particular religious belief  
4 system.

5 Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Mr. Weissman.

7 MR. WEISSMAN: Thank you.

8 My name is Robert Weissman. I'm Co-  
9 director of Essential Action, an organization which  
10 works on combatting abuses of corporate power. I'm  
11 also editor of Multinational Monitor Magazine, which  
12 is a Ralph Nader founded publication that focuses on  
13 multinational corporations.

14 I recently wrote an article on casino  
15 gambling for Multinational Monitor, and I brought  
16 copies of the issue in which that article appears for  
17 the Commission.

18 Essential Action views the gambling  
19 industry as it's evolved in this country over the last  
20 decade or two as a case study in corporate greed and  
21 predation. Gambling interests prey on communities.  
22 Focusing on down trodden and de-industrialized